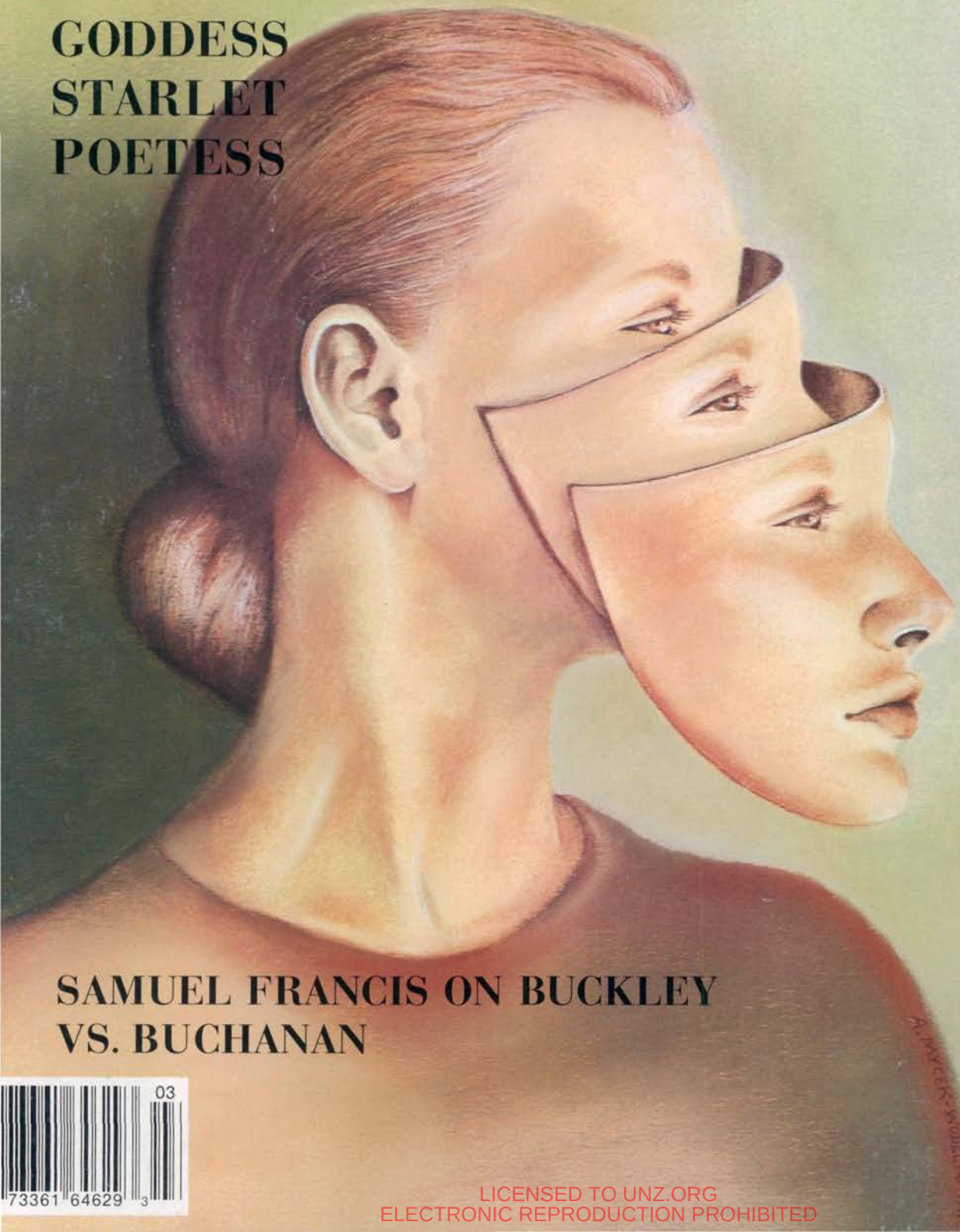
Chronicles

March 1992 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $2.50

FACES OF EVE

GODDESS
STARLET
POETESS



SAMUEL FRANCIS ON BUCKLEY VS. BUCHANAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

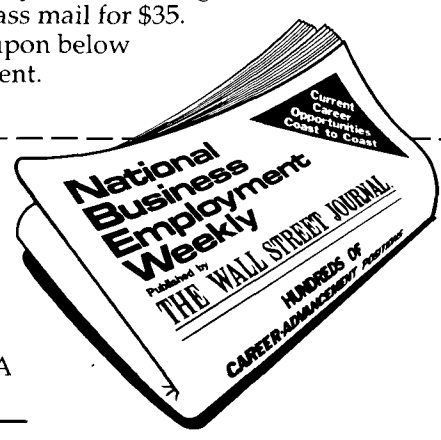
LOOKING FOR A BETTER JOB?
We could have a better job
that's looking for you!
Don't let the career chance of a lifetime slip by.
Look into the National Business Employment Weekly.

Every week, the National Business Employment Weekly, from the publishers of The Wall Street Journal, contains hundreds of top job opportunities from every regional edition of The Journal. Among them could be just the career opening that's right for you.

The National Business Employment Weekly covers the entire range of executive, managerial and professional positions in every industry at all salary levels from $25,000 to $250,000. These are openings with the finest corporations all across the country.

And we'll not only point you in the right direction, we'll help you get there; we'll help you nail down the job that's right for you with valuable job-hunting articles on how to write effective resumes and letters, handle interviews, pick the right personnel agency. . . plus salary statistics for various industries, and much more.

Getting the National Business Employment Weekly could be the best career decision you've ever made. You can find the National Business Employment Weekly on your newsstand. Or, if you prefer, we'll send you the next eight issues by first class mail for $35. Just mail the coupon below with your payment.


Current Career Opportunities Coast to Coast
National Business Employment Weekly
Published by
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
HUNDREDS OF CAREER-ADVANCEMENT POSITIONS

National Business Employment Weekly
228 East 45th Street, Suite 1515, New York, New York 10017

☐ Please send me the next eight issues by first class mail. My check or money order for $35 is enclosed *(please make payable to the National Business Employment Weekly).*

☐ Please charge my: ☐ American Express ☐ Diners Club ☐ MC ☐ VISA

Card #_____ Expires _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____

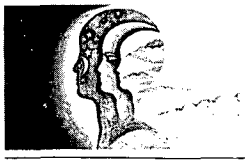
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

2CHRM/36KC

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

PERSPECTIVE



Marriage—the Real Right to Privacy 14
by Thomas Fleming

A plan for surviving the divorce revolution.

VIEWS

The Incredible Shrinking Woman by Janet Scott Barlow 18

From Stanwyck to Streep—tracing the devolution of women on the screen.

Who Is Sylvia? What Is She? by R.S. Gwynn 21

Some thoughts on American women poets.

Fourth of July by Kit Reed 25

A short story.

OPINIONS

The Way We Live by Chilton Williamson, Jr. 29
James Lincoln Collier: *The Rise of Selfishness in America*. The rise and fall of the Victorian ethic.

Getting Back to Nature by Kenneth Craycraft 32
Mary Ann Glendon: *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse*. Explaining America's infatuation with individual rights.

REVIEWS

Marshall DeRosa's *The Confederate Constitution of 1861* reminds us of an important but forgotten document, argues **Clyde Wilson** ◆ Blair Adams' *Who Owns the Children?* shows what happens when Uncle Sam plays parent, writes **C. Winsor Wheeler** ◆ **Gertrude White** recommends Robert Martin's biography of *Gerard Manley Hopkins* ◆ **Bill Kauffman** says Terry Teachout writes well of his own sissyhood in *City Limits: Memories of a Small-Town Boy* ◆ **Gregory McNamee** has high praise for Fred Chappell's *More Shapes Than One* ◆ 35

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Latvia: Choosing Independence 41
by Kelly Cherry

Letter From Canada: A Guide to Political Reform by Kenneth McDonald 42

Letter From the Lower Right: Seeing the Wizard Off by John Shelton Reed 43

VITAL SIGNS

The Politics of Rape by Betsy Clarke 45

Reproductive Tyranny: The New Technology of Fertility Control by Anne Marie Morgan 47

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 4

PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS 12
The Middle-Class Moment
by Samuel Francis

ASK MISS MORALS 31

POETRY
Leaving the Wasatch 20
by Ruth Moose
Blackberries 24
by Gloria Whelan

ON THE COVER

Cover by Anna Mycek-Wodecki.

MARCH 1992/3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Theodore Pappas

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Emily Grant Adams

ART DIRECTOR
Anna Mycek-Wodecki

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
John W. Aldridge, Harold O.J. Brown, Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, Russell Kirk, E. Christian Kopff, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Janet Scott Barlow, Odie Faulk, Jane Greer, John Shelton Reed

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

PUBLISHER
Allan C. Carlson

PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Guy C. Reffett

COMPOSITION MANAGER
Anita Fedora

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.
For information on advertising in *Chronicles*, please call Cathy Corson at (815) 964-5811.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

Copyright © 1992 by The Rockford Institute. All rights reserved.

Chronicles (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $24 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

◆

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 16, No. 3 March 1992

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'America First'

Concerning Thomas Fleming's December Perspective about the America First Committee, anti-interventionists might have taken heart from the statement attributed to Winston Churchill in August 1936 by William Griffen, editor of the New York *Enquirer*: "America should have minded her own business and stayed out of the World War. If you hadn't entered the war the Allies would have made peace with Germany in the Spring of 1917. Had we made peace then there would have been no collapse in Russia followed by Fascism, and Germany would not have signed the Versailles Treaty, which has enthroned Nazism in Germany. If America had stayed out of the war, all these 'isms' wouldn't today be sweeping the continent in Europe and breaking down parliamentary government, and if England had made peace early in 1917, it would have saved over one million British, French, American, and other lives."

—Kenneth McDonald
Willowdale, Ontario, Canada

On 'Environmentalism'

I enjoyed Jigs Gardner's "Letter From Cape Breton Island" (January 1992) on the subject of "The New Utopians." He correctly states that environmentalists are openly utopian, and as such are full of "cocksure ignorance" in support of utopian views. A true utopian has boundless faith in his dream world, and any challenge to that dream is regarded as an example of the unworthiness of mankind to even exist. "We must put civilization in reverse, before it is too late! All we have to do is take our orders and control our every action to be in 'harmony' with the latest fad—population reduction, primitive hardship, and a short, ugly, starving, disease-ridden, preyed-upon 'existence.'" Of course, the Greens would have said it better.

As to Mr. Gardner's liberal arts education, he should not apologize. His letter shows he is way ahead of the mob and has the basics of an inquiring mind, which is the foundation of all liberal arts curricula.

—John A. Fletcher
St. Paul, MN

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR. didn't have a spy novel or a yachting saga in him one recent week, and the skiing season in Gstaad hadn't started yet. So he sat himself down and tinkled out a 40,000-word tome titled "In Search of Anti-Semitism." The article—or book, or monster—consumes the entire issue of the December 30, 1991, *National Review*. The major work of the conservative luminary's declining years goes on—and on and on—for no less than 42 double-column pages of Buckleyesque bloviation.

Mr. Buckley's ostensible purpose is to ponder whether certain ostensible friends on the right and one ostensible foe on the left are or are not guilty of anti-Semitism. The unusual suspects include his "close friend," protégé and colleague at *National Review*, Joe Sobran; former columnist and present presidential candidate Patrick J. Buchanan; the *Nation* and its contributor, novelist Gore Vidal; and the *Dartmouth Review*, an undergraduate conservative publication chiefly notable for sophomoric pranks and the ideological equivalent of swallowing goldfish.

No one much cares what Mr. Buckley says about the *Nation* or the Dartmouth fratty-baggers, but his reflections about Mr. Sobran and Mr. Buchanan have stimulated dismay and outright anger among his and their friends on the right. After wending a tortuous path strewn with misapplied logic and overstuffed sentences, Mr. Buckley puffs to a dubious and equivocal conclusion. While he refrains from saying that either suspect is an anti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Semite, he finds the sentiments expressed by Mr. Sobran "indefensible," and also "finds it impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge that what he did and said during the period under examination amounted to anti-Semitism, whatever it was that drove him to say and do it."

It would be unproductive to retread the road by which Mr. Buckley and a number of others less talented than he have arrived at these non-overwhelming thoughts. Essentially, the case against both Mr. Sobran and Mr. Buchanan consists in applying the most sinister interpretations to the highly figurative language in which both of them (and many other journalists) habitually write. At no time in the several years of controversy over the two individuals in question has anyone who personally knows them well—including their Jewish friends and associates—accused either of them of harboring anti-Semitism or seeking to promote it. Moreover, a number of their friends, Jewish as well as gentile, have defended them against the charge. In the absence of such accusations and of clear evidence of their anti-Semitic intentions, only the malevolent or the manipulated would bring in a verdict of guilty.

Nor does Mr. Buckley reveal anything new about either his "close friend" Mr. Sobran or Mr. Buchanan. Indeed, never in the entire length and breadth of his gargantuan odyssey does Mr. Buckley emit any new information or any enlightening thoughts that would yield a conclusion more portentous than his own personal inability or unwillingness to defend either man. Given the triviality of Mr. Buckley's conclusions, the absence of any compelling evidence to support them, and the staleness of the charges themselves, readers are led ineluctably to an overwhelming question: why did Mr. Buckley choose this particular time to secrete so much mental fluid about this immaterial matter?

Some light on this may be shed by a "backgrounder" published by the American Jewish Committee more than a year ago, in November 1990, at the height of the controversy about Mr. Buchanan. The backgrounder's author, Kenneth Stern, wonders what "we" should do about Mr. Buchanan, and his decision was suggestive. "Unless he says something Mein Kampfish," wrote Mr. Stern, "we should refrain from calling him an anti-Semite. That will only draw attention to him, and bring him defenders. Rather, I suggest we approach other people whom Buchanan's adherents see as equally qualified for the title of 'defender of the faith' to write a rebuttal. When it comes to Catholic-Jewish tensions, why not a leader in the church? And when it is an anti-communism based issue . . . why not a non-Jewish conservative?" If Rasputin and Machiavelli had conspired over cocktails, they could not have concocted a more furtive strategem.

The shoe that fits, of course, is Mr. Buckley, a Catholic conservative. Is it too cynical to ask if the American Jewish Committee (or someone associated with it) manipulated him into launching his insubstantial Scud against Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Sobran? If so, the plotters didn't get their money's worth.

Bill Buckley used to be the king of the conservatives, and when he whispered, the trumpets sounded. Today that's not the case. Most of what he has written in the last few years is simply fashionable chatter; it may make the best-seller list, but there'll never be a Classics Illustrated version.

—*Samuel Francis*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ITALIAN POLITICS get more "interesting" every day. Francesco Cossiga, the head of state, is continuing efforts to convert his largely ceremonial position into something like the benign dictatorship of Charles de Gaulle. His most risky stunt so far was to order the junior officers at a *carabinieri* station to go on alert last November. Actually, he only advised them, but the message was clear: Cossiga was attempting to harden his symbolic role as commander-in-chief into practical control over the national police and the armed forces. This naked grab for power has added persuasive force to the campaign to drive Cossiga from office. The principal instigator of this plot has been Achille Ochetto, head of what used to be the Italian Communist Party.

The most general response to the president's attempt to consolidate power is not so much alarm as disgust, because it is hard to take Cossiga seriously. The editors of *Espresso* must have been speaking for many Italians in declaring last December: "the real trouble with Cossiga, perhaps, is that he will not succeed in constructing anything, either good or bad. . . . Seeing that he is commander of the armed forces and that he loves images of war, one might rebaptize him Commander Zero."

If the Italian political class is no more than annoyed by Cossiga, Senator Umberto Bossi has them quaking in their boots. A few months ago a split in the ranks of the Lega Lombarda had the leaders of the *partitocrazia* celebrating the demise of their only serious opposition. The Lega was predicted to do well in the late November election in Brescia (a significant industrial city in Lombardia), but still somewhere about five percentage points below the Christian Democrats. When the results were in, the Lega Lombarda was, by a hair, at the top of the list with 24.4 percent. The Christian Democrats came in with only 24.3 percent.

One-tenth of a point does not sound like much, but only a year ago, the Lega received only 20 percent in Brescia, as opposed to the Christian Democrats' 32 percent. Despite the attempt to downplay the victory (the outgoing mayor told the *Corriere della Sera* that voting for the "Carroccio" was a refusal to choose), the effect of this dramatic upset has been demoralizing, especially when it is realized that a significant part of Bossi's new support is coming from the ranks of good Catholics. A significant part of the credit for this goes to Irene Pivetti, who helped him organize the Consulta cattolica della Lega.

Instead of confronting Bossi head on, principle against principle, Italian journalists and politicians continue the slander campaign: "fascists," "racists," and "self-centered egoists" are among the kinder epithets being hurled at his followers. The great exception is the skeptical columnist, Giorgio Bocca, who describes this hysterical reaction as "a constant of political history . . . when the arrogance of a power too long without opposition is transfixed by this thought: could this really be the end? It is the moment of panic, when a power that believed it was based on the grace of God — either the extraterrestrial God or the ideological God — feels the weakening of the sacred certainties. It's like someone who begins to hear the creaking and see the cracks in the ice, like one who calls out in the night and no one answers."

The Italian crisis is more serious than the American crisis, and Bocca is more eloquent and intelligent than most American journalists, but his powerful images might easily be applied to our own situation. The man who calls out in the night and hears no answer may be George Bush afraid to take Pat Buchanan's wake-up call to the White House.

—Thomas Fleming

WHERE FRINGE FEMINISM and environmentalism meet there is found a shrine to the "Goddess." Last May *Time* magazine reported that "Goddess worship" is a "growing spiritual movement in the U.S.," claiming as many as one hundred thousand adherents, most of them female. On May 12, 1991, the *New York Times* placed its imprimatur on the movement, declaring in an editorial that "Goddess worship . . . is rooted in reverence for the Ultimate Mother, for woman as the giver of life." According to the *Times*, in ancient Goddess-adoring matriarchies, "Life was peaceful, cooperative and egalitarian, while in societies focused on the male gods it was violent, authoritarian and stratified. In addition, the Goddess-based cultures cherished Earth as nurturer of humankind." Accordingly, "Goddess worship resonates with modern environmentalism, and in particular with the Gaia hypothesis — the theory . . . that the Earth and its biosphere behave like a single living organism."

How do we know so much about the ancient Goddess cult, which supposedly was abolished by the advent of monotheism some three thousand years ago? Through the miracle of feminist scholarship, of course. During the past several years numerous "scholarly" works dealing with the Goddess have been produced: *The Great Cosmic Mother* by Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor; *The Women's History of the World* by Rosalind Miles; *The Chalice and the Blade* by Riane Eisler, to name but three examples. Such works trade in the assumptions found in the *Times* editorial — that somewhere in the arcadian mists of antiquity there existed an egalitarian Goddess-based society that was destroyed by patriarchal usurpers. All of the evil that plagues humanity therefore has its roots in the destruction of the Goddess-inspired order, and "healing" will occur when that order is restored.

If feminist pseudo-scholarship is not enough to persuade the unconverted, perhaps a new mystery play would help. *Mother Wove the Morning*, a one-woman play written and performed by Carol Lynn Pearson, offers 16 vignettes designed to make the concept of the Goddess a palpable reality. Pearson is a Mormon, after a fashion: Orthodox Mormons believe that there is, in addition to a Heavenly Father, a Heavenly Mother — but that the subject is beyond the concern of mortals, and that worshiping the Mother is a species of idolatry. According to Pearson, true worship should be directed at a "partnership" — "The human animal [should] get to an adult where he or she can work for balance, can acknowledge the absolute equal valuing of male and female, and have room on our mantelpieces for mother as well as father. . . . I don't know of anything that's more great and important — and I mean really important to us right now — than to further validate the human female by bringing into our concept and to our worship the divine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

female."

In the play various women from different stages of history speak achingly of the need for the Goddess. Rachel, wife of Jacob ("As in Abraham, Isaac and . . ." Pearson explains) is made to mouth the contemporary feminist party line: she remembers the benevolent era of the Goddess and the brutal, monotheist patriarchs who deposed the "Mother." This memory, we are told, explains Rachel's decision to steal the figurines of several "gods" from Laban (an event described in Genesis, chapter 31); among those "gods," we are assured, was an image of the Goddess.

The "Rachel" segment exemplifies the play's approach. It takes a familiar event from scriptural history and invests it with a feminist subtext, effectively inverting the event's scriptural significance. Idol worshipers suddenly become the Good Guys—the innocent victims trying to preserve the healing image of the "Mother." This perspective utterly invalidates the Judeo-Christian canon as a source of spiritual truth, thus producing a vacuum to be filled by acolytes of the Goddess.

Pearson's play is a runaway smash in Utah. In January 1990 a scheduled 14-date engagement had to be extended to 30 performances in order to meet the demand. An unadvertised performance offered for students at Brigham Young University quickly sold out. The message took root with some BYU students: BYU English teacher Elouise Bell reports that during a Q-and-A period following the performance "All participants seemed to accept her premises; their questions had to do with solutions and particulars: 'How can we . . . ?'" One student offered a public validation of Pearson's Mother hypothesis: the opening prayer at the April 1991 BYU commencement began, "Our Father and Mother in Heaven . . ."

If Pearson can find a receptive audience in Utah—the very bosom of the dreaded patriarchy—she can make it anywhere. Since the play's debut in Utah in 1990, the production has played in Phoenix and Chicago, where it enjoyed extended runs; the play was also warmly received in Ireland. In September 1991 the production returned to Utah, where it was greeted again with sold-out auditoriums.

Pearson professes to be "thrilled" by the response generated by her play: "I have had such a wonderful response from people of all backgrounds, people of all religions or no religion [and] as I'd listen in the lobby after the play, they'd say, 'Oh, let me tell you what my church is doing to bring back the concept of the Mother.'" The desire to bring back the "Mother" can be seen in the use of "gender-inclusive" language in hymnals, prayers, and revisions of the Bible.

The vice-president of the Jungian Psychiatry Institute was so taken with Pearson's drama that he asked her to perform the play at the organization's international conference later this year. According to Pearson, "Jungian psychologists know that the most important psychological work we have to do in this last decade of the 20th century is the reintegration of the feminine divine into our religious experience."

Does anybody still doubt the reality of the Goddess? After all, can the *New York Times*, the Jungian Psychiatry Institute, and Pearson's rhapsodic audiences all be wrong?

—*William Grigg*

WHEN MAGIC JOHNSON announced that he was retiring from basketball because he had tested positive for the HIV virus, the nation fell into the kind of cultural coma that is all too common in recent history. The national television networks interrupted regularly scheduled programs for live coverage of Magic's news conference and ran nightly retrospectives on his life and career. Reporters took to the streets to capture the shock and tears of his fans and admirers. Athletes testified to the many gifts Magic had "given the nation." Los Angeles Lakers' broadcaster Chick Hearn wondered whether "there will ever be a sadder story than this," and if "basketball will ever recover." Senators and congressmen pondered the meaning of it all, and President Bush interrupted a NATO conference in Rome to declare Magic a "national hero."

Of course, there was one segment of the nation that was both clear-eyed and clearheaded: the AIDS lobby. Magic Johnson was the high-profile figure it had long sought—the person whose affliction it could market to show that "anyone" could get AIDS—and Magic played right into its hands. At a national news conference, Magic pointed to his genitals and said, "Put your thinking caps on, and put your cap on down there." This was the mature and courageous message that convinced President Bush that Magic was a "gentleman who has handled his problem in a wonderful manner." Magic then joined AIDS activist Tom Stoddard to announce their concerted push for "explicit AIDS and sex education" on prime-time television and in elementary schools. Even the international community responded to Magic's call. Just in case athletes are in need of some diversion from the competition they have trained and prepared a lifetime for, the international Olympics committee announced that all athletes, ostensibly male and female alike, will receive free condoms while in Barcelona.

The Magic Johnson story offers many lessons, but they are not the slogans being chanted by the national media and AIDS lobby. It is certainly true that anyone can get AIDS—anyone, that is, who behaves like Magic Johnson. Basketball player Mark Jackson said Magic "touched the whole world," and we now know that Magic did indeed do a lot of touching. One of his close friends, Pamela McGee, admitted that it "didn't surprise me that Magic had the disease. Knowing his flamboyant lifestyle, it was bound to happen sooner or later. Magic's closest friends always knew him as a major player and womanizer. He has had one-night stands with what he calls 'freaks' across America." Magic admitted this himself, saying "I did my best to accommodate as many women as I could."

This story has also reinforced an old stereotype and a famous double standard. In a recent national talk show dealing with the lack of positive role models for minority youth, a number of black women correctly noted that Magic's actions have done little to counter the image of black males as ignorant, irresponsible, and sexually insatiable, whatever their aptitude for bouncing a ball. This story also offended women athletes, because Magic will remain a million-dollar draw for commercial purposes. For all her whining, Martina Navratilova made a valid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

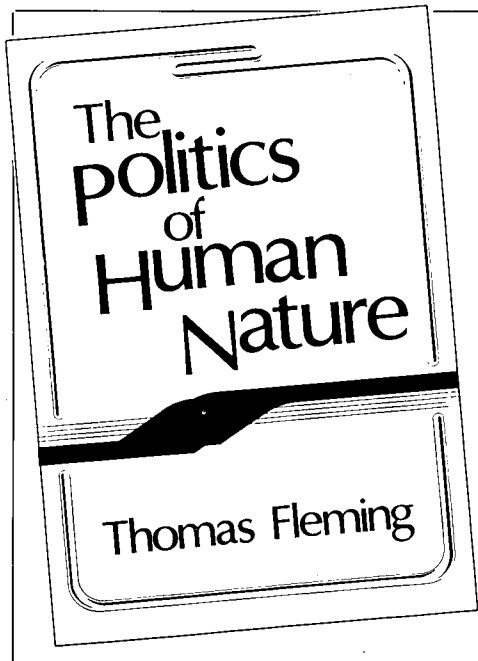
point: "If it had happened to a heterosexual woman who had been with 100 or 200 men, they'd call her a whore and a slut, and the corporations would drop her like a lead balloon. And she'd never get a job in her life." Miss Navratilova, a lesbian, added: "I don't have one damn endorsement outside of rackets and shoes." Conclusion from Madison Avenue: better an immoral and sexually immature male than a lesbian who believes in monogamous relationships.

Most importantly, this incident should be used for opening debate on the role that sports and athletes play in American culture. Last year Bobby Bonilla was a good, slightly above-average baseball player for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Last December he became the highest-paid athlete in the history of team sports, signing a $29 million contract to play five years for the New York Mets. And by all standards, Bonilla has nowhere near the potential or ability of a dozen other players currently in baseball. A Little League baseball manager in La Center, Washington, was last year charged with second-degree assault with a deadly weapon when he beat an umpire with a baseball bat during a post-game argument. The umpire had called the game because of darkness, meaning the score of the game reverted to the previous inning when the other team was winning. The manager was also a local school board member. One of the arguments used by Edwin Edwards in the recent gubernatorial election in Louisiana was that, if David Duke were elected, athletes would be scared away from attending Louisiana schools, costing the state millions in lost revenue. Sports tainting politics by tainting higher education — not a pretty scenario.

At Dixie College in St. George, Utah, crimes committed by school athletes have led to a heated debate in the local press. In the last seven years, there have been 27 charges of rape on campus — 24 against athletes, 22 of them being against football players. Last year four Dixie football players were charged with varying crimes involving three teenaged girls, and a group of recruits committed a robbery while staying at Dixie. One football player had an extensive juvenile record, including the beating of a man who later died. The chief of campus security, Don Reid, told Sandi Graff of the local *Daily Spectrum* that he knew of players who had been recruited right out of prison. Football coach Greg Croshaw was fending off charges late last year that he had met with a probation officer and a judge in Arizona to get a prisoner an early release to play football at Dixie.

With sports permeating every pore of American culture, the public response to the Magic Johnson story should not be surprising. A German news agency compared Magic Johnson to the Persian Gulf War in the degree of national attention garnered in the American press — what a comfort to parents who lost a son or daughter in the Saudi desert.

Alexander the Great slept with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow to get closer to the noble and heroic figures of antiquity, but our kids have a different class of heroes. The classics are out, along with virtue and exemplary



"Learned, thoughtful, and superbly written . . . ."

–Robert Nisbet
NATIONAL REVIEW

"In this probing and thoughful book, Thomas Fleming has begun to address the principal challenge to our society and polity."
–Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
CHRONICLES

"A thoughtful conservative of the old school. . . . Progressives and radicals could benefit from grappling with Fleming's intellectually stimulating presentation."
THE PROGRESSIVE

ISBN: 0-88738-189-8 (cloth) 276 pp. **$32.95**

Major credit cards accepted. Call (201) 932-2280
Send prepaid orders to:

transaction publishers
Department FL
Rutgers–The State University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

transaction

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deeds. For today's would-be heroes, it's grab your "cap" and *carpe diem*. Or, as stated in Magic's old Nike commercials, "Just do it!"

—*Theodore Pappas*

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (*Publishers Weakly* in my book), though it is one of the most depressing magazines in America, obviously considers itself a sprightly, thoughtful, and somewhat "irreverent" publication, gifted with the insight to see that the emperor has no clothes on and blessed with the courage to stand forward and say so. In the bold tradition of Jeremiah and St. Paul, Voltaire and Swift, Samuel Butler and H.L. Mencken, Mailer and Vonnegut and Donahue, PW (as it is known affectionately in the trade) performed the daring and unprecedented act of placing on the cover of its number for September 27, 1991, "An Open Letter to President Bush," which said in part, "Dear Mr. President: Because you have made education policy an important part of your administration . . . [w]e urge you to read a startling and disturbing new book, *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol, due shortly from Crown Publishing. . . . It is the story of how, in our public schools, we are creating a country profoundly different from the one our founders envisaged. It is the story of two nations that are separate and unequal in their educational facilities, and tells how this unfair imbalance has been largely created and maintained by the inequitable distribution of public funds. Clearly, something must be done about American education, but too often those who work to reform it do so through notions of 'choice' and 'competition,' market terms that have no place in a debate on the needs of our poor children. In the end, there is no doubt that we will have to spend money, and a lot of it, to bring genuine equality to our schools." This letter was succeeded on the following two pages by excerpts from Kozol's book, and on the third by a special editorial by the editor in chief, John F. Baker, who endorsed both the letter and Kozol and called for "a coordinated, industry-wide program" in which publishers can work to help solve the crisis of educational inequality in America.

That's called sticking your neck out. (Who says literary folk are natural cowards?) It would help, though, if there were a brainpan at the end of it. Judging from the excerpts selected by PW, I would have to say that Kozol's book rests on politically directed emotionalism, not on sustained, analytical argument. Both Kozol and Baker dismiss the premise of the Bush administration's *America 2000: An Education Strategy* that, "Excellent schools don't have to cost more." If that is so, Baker demands, "then why is so much money consistently being spent on the better ones?" as Kozol implies that it is. The answer to that question, of course, is, "How much better are the 'better' schools?" The SAT scores, along with the rest of the national statistics, say, "not much." High school students who cannot locate their home state on a map are not restricted to the inner-city schools. In 19th-century America, one-room schoolhouses such as those in which Laura Ingalls Wilder taught (and was taught) routinely produced students whose knowledge of mathematics, history, geography, and literature was greatly superior to that of most public high school teachers today, though they were expected to provide their own pencils and slates and often read their lessons out of the same book their seatmates used. The question is not whether black and white pupils learn in the company of one another, but whether anyone learns anything at all. Ah, well (we old book-review hands may say), PW's forte isn't educational policy, but at least its heart is in the right place. And where do you suppose *that* would be? "In the end, there is no doubt that we will have to spend money, and a lot of it."

You have to understand that the American book publishing industry is on the ropes at the start of the recessive 90's, having blown huge sums of money in the prosperous 80's in the attempt to make like Trump Enterprises. (It wasn't just the purveyors of video equipment, home computers, and junk bonds who succumbed to corporate hubris in what Jonathan Kozol calls "the Reagan era.") Huge advances paid to "authors" like Stephen King to prevent them from signing with the competition ultimately could not be earned out, since the finite expansion of chain stores like B. Dalton and Waldenbooks was necessarily unable to keep pace with the infinite greed of writers and their agents.

Many publishing houses merged with one another; many more, like Simon & Schuster and Random House, were purchased by vast conglomerates whose directors knew (and still know) nothing of publishing, let alone of books that they regard as so many marketable units like cars or tubes of toothpaste. As a result of these changes, a different type of person was drawn into the publishing "industry." Publishers have always tended to be second-rate businessmen and third-rate intellects, but at least they used to love good books and respect the people who wrote them. Today, editors are increasingly people whose formation is not literary but commercial and whose experience is in marketing and sales rather than in literature. To them, Third Avenue is an easier, more glamorous, and romantic version of Wall Street or Sunset Boulevard, allowing you to drink all night with Norman Mailer or visit the discos with Jay McInerney, get to the office at eleven, and take Alice Walker or Jonathan Kozol to lunch at the Four Seasons at noon. In present-day publishing, very few manuscripts are actually read, most "editing" is done by freelancers, very little talent or even competence is applied to very little work, and hardly any money is made. Indeed, a great deal of it is lost. Having long ago forgotten what ought to be their main goal—namely, the acquisition and publishing of good books—publishers today have literally no idea what they are doing, or even what they want to do. As for the schoolbook departments, they are confronted with declining school enrollments and increasing illiteracy and ignorance on the part of faculties as well as of their student bodies. In response to the situation, school publishers invest large sums in audios and videos and other "learning aids," while their trade-book counterparts search diligently for Stephen King imitators and celebrities willing to cooperate with ghostwriters to produce "intimate autobiographies," and hope everything turns out for the best.

Meaning, of course, that they may make a lot of money. *Publishers Weekly* and John F. Baker are coy about this, trying to vitiate accusations of self-interest by anticipating them. "We

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supply," Baker writes, "the textbooks and reading materials most of [the schools] use; it is very much in our interest, as business people as well as citizens, to want to see an educated populace that can read and enjoy books." What cant. A glance at the rest of the issue suggests PW's idea of "reading," of "books," and of the nature of literary enjoyment. After television and the American public educational establishment, the American publishing industry has done more to subvert and destroy standards of taste, literacy, and intelligence than any other institution in the national life. For two decades at least, they have been busily "down-leveling" the textbooks they market to a captive school system, just as they have worked deliberately to degrade the so-called adult trade market to a standard largely of their own creation.

Now they are upset about the mess that is public education in this country, to which their answer is "an industry-wide program" to involve themselves in matters for which they have no professional competence or experience whatever. If only they could just get back to the business of intelligent book publishing, they would be doing all that civic duty could possibly require of them.

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

HOWARD NEMEROV, one of our country's titans of literature, died last July. He published his first book shortly after World War II, and during the next 44 years a stream of 26 books garnered for him the country's most prestigious awards. He won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer in 1978 for his *Collected Poems*, the Bollingen Prize for Poetry in 1981, and the National Medal for the Arts in 1987. Our third Poet Laureate for the years 1988-90, Nemerov was a consummate man of letters who excelled in several literary genre.

His essays range in subject matter from Dante and Shakespeare to Thomas Mann and Proust, from computers to painting, and his exquisite insights have been happily free of the self-isolating jargon that has lately typified this field. The body of Nemerov's criticism alone would be the envy of those who solely pursue this activity.

His achievement in poetry looms largest in the public mind, and it was his poetry that has been responsible for most of his awards. Of another poet Nemerov has written: "I prefer poems which want to be read hard and which respond to the closest attention . . . it is a matter rather of how you approach one thought through another with an effect of surprise; a matter of the steepness of the gradient between the immediate and the inferred." The gradient of Nemerov's own work is sometimes steep indeed, but the surprise at the end of the slope is partly what draws readers to him. He is a poet who has read widely and deeply and who is aware of literary history and traditions. Unlike some, he does not think that he has invented himself. There are real poets in our time who have been much less aware of certain modern dilemmas and crises, but it is this added dimension of his work that greatly expands Nemerov's vision and, perhaps, excludes some of his audience: how can they respond if they are only vaguely aware of such problems as the challenges of scientism or of positivism?

Detractors have claimed that the poetry is "academic" and "over-intellectualized." If the reader is looking for a response to the world in extravagantly sensuous terms, he will be disappointed—yet so many of Nemerov's best poems respond to "deep sayings" found in wild nature. That there might have been a mixed response in the romantic 60's and 70's could have been expected. Nemerov is not promising apocalypse, or millennium; and he was no darling of the talk shows.

He has noted in a poem entitled "To the Bleeding Hearts Association of American Novelists" that there are writers who "slop their ketchup in the statue's wounds / And advertise *that* blood as from the heart." He concludes, "I like those masters better who expound / More inwardly the nature of our loss, / And only offhand let us know they've found / No better composition than a cross." It is the latter that we have come to expect in his own verse.

Nemerov's fiction is no small accomplishment, either, especially the three novels, *Federigo, or the Power of Love*, *The Melodramatists*, and *The Homecoming Game*, which has been turned into a movie. Thomas Mann praised Nemerov's fiction as work of "keen imagination." All the novels had been out of print for some time, but are now being reissued by the University of Missouri Press.

Often a reader feels that Nemerov is working in a fashion analogous to subatomic physicists, tracking the illusive, phantom-like trails of a world beyond ordinary sight, revealing the deep-down things while at the same time sharing these discoveries with wonder and humility. Above all, his work is *about* something. The poems and fiction are not merely exercises in technical virtuosity.

About Vermeer, another master, Nemerov has written: "Taking what is, and seeing it as it is, / Pretending to no heroic stances or gestures, / Keeping it simple; being in love with light." So he has done and been himself, which is no mean epitaph.

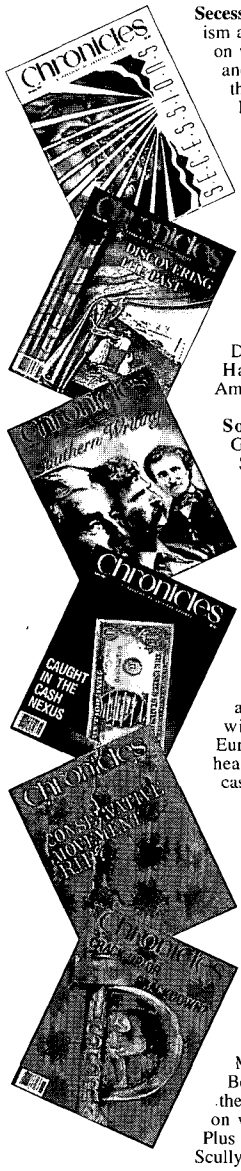
—*William Mills*

WE ARE PLEASED to report that the February 1992 issue of *Chronicles*—"Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Welfare"—was funded, in part, through a special grant from the Alex C. Walker Educational and Charitable Trust of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Production scheduling prevented adequate acknowledgment within the pages of that issue.

OUR JANUARY ISSUE engendered numerous queries as to the availability of books on and by Pitirim Sorokin and James Burnham. Transaction Publishers of New Brunswick, New Jersey, last year republished the popular one-volume edition of Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Transaction has also just published an edition of Adolf A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means' 1933 classic, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, which greatly influenced James Burnham. We wish also to recommend the August-November 1991 issue of the *Chesterton Review*. Edited by the Reverend Ian Boyd, this issue deals exclusively with the life, works, and theories of C.S. Lewis. The issue can be obtained by writing the *Chesterton Review*, St. Thomas More College, 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, S7N OW6.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Secessions—January 1991—Tomislav Sunic on globalism and the right of self-determination, Bill Kauffman on why Upstate should secede from New York City, and Thomas Fleming on Italy's example of unity through division. Plus Theodore Pappas on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctoral dissertation, Allan Brownfeld on Pat Buchanan and his critics, and J.O. Tate on the correspondence of Andrew Lytle, Allen Tate, and Robert Lowell.

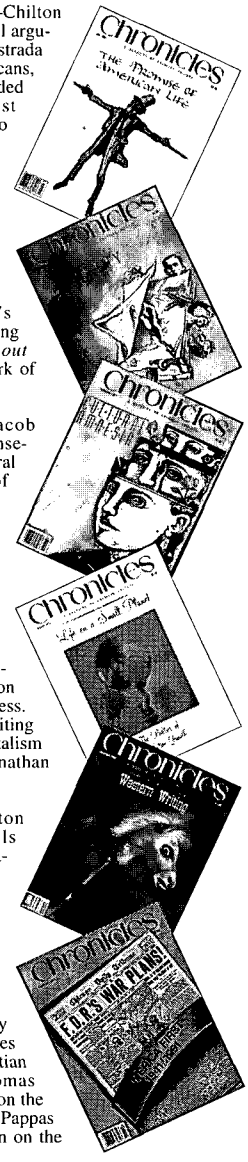
Discovering the Past—February 1991—Forrest McDonald on the study of history, M.E. Bradford on the Constitutional Convention, and Charles Causley on the role the past plays in his poetry. Plus George Garrett on John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest*, Fred Chappell on the best and worst of Donald Hall, David Slavitt on the life and work of O.B. Hardison, and Thomas Fleming on modern American verse.

Southern Literature—March 1991—George Garrett on the state of Southern letters, Madison Smartt Bell on the short story, Dabney Stuart on Fred Chappell, Fred Chappell's story "Ancestors," and poems by James Seay and R.H.W. Dillard. Plus Henry Taylor and Kelly Cherry on Southern poetry, George Core on the literary quarterlies, and Steven Goldberg on the teaching of sociology.

Caught in the Cash Nexus—April 1991—Irving Horowitz and Mary Curtis on "bottom-line" thinking and national productivity, Josh Ozersky on the seduction of cable's Nick at Nite, and Thomas Molnar on why European unification will never occur. Plus Samuel Francis on the European New Right, George Carey on the present health of the Constitution, and Frank Bryan on the case for Vermont's secession.

Conservative Movement: R.I.P.?—May 1991—Six views on conservatism by Wick Allison, Charley Reese, Clyde Wilson, Murray N. Rothbard, Howard Phillips, and Donald Devine. Plus Samuel Francis on the failure of American conservatism, Florence King on misanthropy, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the history of isolationism, and Peter Stanlis's vindication of Edmund Burke.

U.S.S.R.: Crack-up or Crackdown?—June 1991—Andrei Navrozov on Soviet deception and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Yuri Maltsev on the unveiling of Soviet myths, Arnold Beichman on Gorbachev and reform, Jay Kinney on the state of Soviet propaganda, and Thomas Fleming on what America can learn from the Soviet Union. Plus Jeffrey Tucker on enterprise zones, and Matthew Scully's review of Carl Rowan's autobiography.



The Promise of American Life—July 1991—Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the cultural and environmental arguments against increased immigration, Richard Estrada on the impact of immigration on Hispanic-Americans, Thomas Fleming on how Ellis Island has superceded Jamestown and Plymouth Rock, and novelist Edward Redlinski's account of emigrating to America. Plus Milton Rosenberg on Paul de Man and J.O. Tate on the music of Ignaz Friedman.

Penny Dreadfuls—August 1991—Robert Sampson on adventure fiction, Richard S. Wheeler on the clichés of the traditional Western, and Thomas Fleming on the utopian and dystopian visions of science fiction. Plus Llewellyn H. Rockwell on Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven*, Ellen Wilson Fielding on Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Feminism Without Illusions*, and Bill Kauffman on the life and work of Henry W. Clune.

Cultural Amnesia—September 1991—Jacob Neusner on the loss of knowledge and its consequences, George Watson on the role of the literal man, Anthony Harrigan on the importance of dreams and reveries, and Theodore Pappas on the meaning of the New World Order. Plus Frank Brownlow on Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, Jack D. Douglas on the sex studies of Alfred Kinsey, and Lorrin Anderson on the politics of docudrama.

Life on a Small Planet—October 1991—Garrett Hardin on why good fences make good neighbors, Jacqueline Kasun on population control and the environment, and Richard D. Lamm on the role of culture in determining national success. Plus Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the politics of writing histories of Columbus, Thomas Molnar on capitalism and Eastern Europe, and Florence King on Jonathan Agronsky's *Marion Barry*.

Western Writing—November 1991—Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the work of Laura Ingalls Wilder, A. Carl Bredahl on why Western narrative is so American, Stephen Bodio on the life and literature of ranchwomen, and a short story by Kent Nelson. Plus M.E. Bradford on the *Western Writers Series*, Thomas Fleming on traveling in Italy, and John Shelton Reed on the environment and the federal government.

America First: 1941/1991—December 1991—Four views of the America First Committee by Justus D. Doenecke, Wayne S. Cole, Ruth Sarles Benedict, and Leonard P. Liggio. Plus E. Christian Kopff on the Veterans of Future Wars, Thomas Fleming on the lessons of 1941, Samuel Francis on the need for a new America First policy, Theodore Pappas on the Tyler Kent affair, and John B. Thompson on the art of indoctrination.

BACK ISSUE ORDER FORM

1 to 4 issues $5.00 each; 5 to 9 issues $3.00 each (postage & handling included);
10 or more issues $2.00 each (postage billed separately)

Date	Qty.	Cost	Date	Qty.	Cost
January 1991	_____	_____	July 1991	_____	_____
February 1991	_____	_____	August 1991	_____	_____
March 1991	_____	_____	September 1991	_____	_____
April 1991	_____	_____	October 1991	_____	_____
May 1991	_____	_____	November 1991	_____	_____
June 1991	_____	_____	December 1991	_____	_____

Total Enclosed $_____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail with check to: Chronicles * 934 N. Main Street * Rockford, IL 61103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Samuel Francis

The Middle-Class Moment

With a whoop and a holler, politicians have suddenly discovered that there's a wild animal called the American middle class prowling around the voting booths, and officeholders are pounding down the stairs to make sure the rough beast does no damage once it gets inside the house. Almost every issue that has emerged in national politics in the last year—term limits and taxes, housing and health care, racial quotas and rascals in government—centers around the cultural identity and material interests of the middle class, and the nation's incumbent oligarchs well understand that all the growling about such matters is rather like the roaring of lions in the jungle night. It's when the roaring stops and the hunt begins that they better start worrying.

The hunt began last fall with the Pyrrhic victory of the oligarchs over David Duke in Louisiana and the announcement soon afterwards of both Mr. Duke and Patrick J. Buchanan of their Middle American-oriented campaigns for President as Republicans. Before that, however, Democrats like Pennsylvania's Harris Wofford and Iowa's Tom Harkin were raising populist banners that the white middle class was likely to find attractive. At the same time, even the oracles of conventional wisdom were beginning to perceive that the middle class was in economic trouble. Columnist George Will, ever a reliable source for what is respectable to think and say, announced his persuasion that middle-class economic distress was a significant political force, and *Newsweek*, which is even more conventional if not always as wise as Mr. Will, rehearsed the facts and figures of middle-class withering in a cover story the following week. Other journalistic accounts around the same time—in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, among others—also burrowed into the statistical underbrush to document the same story and sagely pondered its political implications.

The arithmetic of annihilation is by now reasonably familiar. As Mr. Will reported, "The wages of average workers are below 1979 levels, but family incomes have been maintained by wives going to work. In 1960, 30 percent of wives with children under 18 worked. By 1987, 65 percent did. . . . In 1950, the average middle-age middle-class homeowner spent 14 percent of his gross income on mortgage payments. By 1973, that had crept up to 21 percent. In the next 10 years it rocketed to 44 percent. Home ownership rates, which rose for six decades, declined."

The reality of middle-class decline is masked by the continuity between the figures for income levels in earlier periods and those for more recent years. The reason for the apparent continuity is that wives are working and thereby bringing in extra income to compensate for what would otherwise be a clear fall in earnings and living standards. The middle class runs faster, expends more energy, to stay in the same place.

Of course, there are the perennial optimists, mostly self-described "conservatives," who make a living out of claiming that the middle class is more prosperous than ever. They like to point to the availability of VCRs, personal computers, and shopping malls to make their case that we've never had it so good. Such cheerleaders seem not to have met Mrs. Margaret Collier of Peoria, Illinois, and thousands of wives like her. Mrs. Collier in fact doesn't hold a job, but that's because, as she told the *New York Times*, "It takes me working full-time at home to keep the bills down to the point that we can live on his [Mr. Collier's] income. I split the wood [for the Franklin stove], plant and work a vegetable garden, can vegetables, buy meat when it is on sale, help my husband fix our cars." Not only does Mrs. Collier not have a personal computer. She seems to live at pretty much the same economic and technological level as an Apache squaw before modern civilization liberated her.

As for home ownership, the Census Bureau reports that today only 9 percent of the nation's renters can afford to buy a home and that 36 percent of actual homeowners would be unable to buy a median-priced home if they had to do so on the market at the time of the survey. To own a home and support a wife who doesn't work are, of course, deeply held aspirations of the American middle class, and the decline of the ability to do so represents a serious economic demotion. It also represents an important social and cultural change. Home ownership—even the abstract and rather fictitious sort of mortgaged ownership to which Americans in recent generations have become habituated—is one of the traditional symbols of the economic and social independence that distinguishes free men from medieval serfs bound to the land or slaves fed from their master's hand. It is difficult to see how the transiency that residential renting involves can be consistent with the kind of rooted commitment to community (or family, for that matter) on which republican government must rely. It is also difficult to understand how family institutions can flourish when wives and mothers must work for a living outside the home. That married women must increasingly do so means fewer children and alternate provisions for existing children—and for preparing meals, shopping, cleaning, etc. Today it means a massive redistribution of social functions and the psychic and moral dislocations that redistribution involves: husbands keeping house, children cooking for themselves, and women escaping the natural bonds of home and husband.

The economic independence of the middle class disappeared long ago, however, when modern corporate and governmental organizations began to swallow the independent businesses and farms that made the bourgeois class of the 19th century the core of American society, politics, and culture. At the turn of the century, as historian James Lincoln Collier writes, the middle class constituted "no more than a quarter of the population of the United States," but nevertheless

it was the dominant section of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the social system. It staffed the executive offices of the burgeoning industrial machine, it supplied the majority of office-holders in national, state, and to a lesser extent city governments, it created the art and literature of the time, and perhaps most important, it set the style which those who hoped to rise must follow. In a certain sense this Victorian middle class would—for the moment—decide what America was all about.

The moment did not last long. As Mr. Collier argues, the massive immigration into the United States in the late 19th century from Eastern and Southern Europe introduced alien subcultural fragments into a largely Anglo-Saxon culture, and the immigrants "were bringing to the United States an array of habits, attitudes, and folkways that conflicted, at times dramatically, with the prevailing American patterns of thought and behavior. They were, in sum, resolutely anti-Victorian in almost every respect. They did not believe in discipline, punctuality, sobriety—the order and decency of the Victorian ethic," which was also a middle-class ethic, and as new immigrants rose socially and economically, especially through the mass entertainment industry they helped create, they displaced the Victorian ethic with their own anti-bourgeois patterns of living.

The "Victorian ethic" was a code well-adapted to an entrepreneurial society of independent, self-governing bourgeois, but it was a code that could not serve the mass organizations of corporation and state, union and political party, that were displacing the compact, autonomous, and decentralized institutions of the old republic. Absorbed within these organizations as workers, consumers, and largely passive audiences and voters, the American middle class ceased to be either independent or dominant, and it increasingly took on the characteristics of a proletariat, despite the affluence that it retained.

Middle-class affluence was preserved by the engines of managerial capitalism in close alliance with the administrative state, and if the middle class fought the wars and paid the taxes for the emerging leviathan, it also received no small share of the material benefits in the form of farm subsidies, small business loans, education through the G.I. Bill, housing policy, and union legislation. Having gained material security through its dependence on the managerial system, however, the middle class ceased to be both independent as well as the dominant and defining core of American society, and the bourgeois ethic of the 19th century slowly began to wither. By the 1950's, television's situation comedies and the dreadful instructional films that warned teenagers of the perils of drugs, sex, drinking, rock and roll, and reckless driving recorded the lame efforts of a deracinated and dislocated middle class desperately trying to transmit its codes to its progeny and pathetically proving that it had not the slightest idea of how to do so.

Yet today even the moment of material security that the middle class enjoyed has proved fleeting, and what is occurring in the economy now is the final stage of proletarianization and dispossession before the middle class disappears forever as a distinct stratum of society. Fragments of the bourgeois ethic survive and provide a makeshift ideological framework for the middle-class revolt now bubbling in the suburbs and housing developments, but what feeds the revolt is not so much any fierce attachment to the Victorian ethic or the old republic it served as a demand for the kind of material security the post-bourgeois middle class once enjoyed.

What the leaders of the revolt must do is understand and make clear to their potential following that that kind of security cannot be restored unless those who demand it have gained sufficient political and cultural power to become again the defining core of the whole society and to identify the national interest with their own social interests and identity. But such political and cultural power can be gained only if the post-bourgeois middle class is able and willing to form a distinct social and political identity separate from the old bourgeois middle class and in opposition to the incumbent elites in the state, economy, and culture. Today the middle class has too many competitors among the underclass and its elite allies for the material benefits of the mega-state for the middle class to expect to retain the benefits it once enjoyed without a struggle for power. Moreover, the current elites not only don't care about the economic security of the American middle class (or of America); they welcome its decline and destruction. The *New York Times*, in its account of the plight of the Peoria middle class, quotes Chairman Donald V. Fites of Caterpillar, Inc., the industrial mainstay of Peoria, that "There is a narrowing of the gap between the average American's income and that of the Mexicans. As a human being, I think what is going on is positive. I don't think it is realistic for 250 million Americans to control so much of the world's G.N.P."

With leaders like Mr. Fites, the average American would be better off swimming the Rio Grande and seeking welfare in Matamoros. Only if the post-bourgeois stratum aspires to displace the incumbent elite, dismantle its apparatus of power, and itself constitute a new elite and reconstitute American society can it expect to restore its own security, preserve itself from destruction, and extend its present moment in the political sun into an enduring epoch of civilization. ◈

LIBERAL ARTS

FORNICATION ETIQUETTE

"When two people have been intimate, and the sexual encounter was a pleasant experience for both, it should be considered a common courtesy the next day for one to get in touch with the other, if for no other reason than to say 'thank you.' Neither person should take a thank-you call as a profession of love or as an indication of desire on the caller's part to deepen the relationship."

—*from* New Manners for the '90s *by Letitia Baldridge.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Marriage—the Real Right to Privacy

by Thomas Fleming

The 150-year-old crusade for women's rights in America has, in the different phases of its history, devoted its energies to diverse causes. In the decades before and after the War Between the States, the principal cause was the right of married women to control their own property. In the early 20th century, the cause was suffrage, and in more recent years it has been abortion—and equal pay for equal work. However, during most of this period, divorce laws were always an important item on the feminists' agenda. The strict regulation of divorce was, they argued, one of patriarchy's most powerful weapons, and only when women were freed of this legal terror, could they truly be free.

One of their first important successes was a change in custody practices. The redefinition of men's and women's social spheres in the 19th century had led to the new conception of woman as an exclusively nurturing and affectionate creature, and by the 20th century children, who had been in former times uniformly given to their father's custody in cases of divorce, were now routinely being given to their mothers.

The culmination of the feminist divorce program were the no-fault divorce laws enacted throughout the United States in the 1960's and 70's, and the success or failure of the women's movement stands or falls with our interpretation of such legal and political changes. In recent years pragmatic feminists have argued that liberalized divorce laws have benefited men at the expense of women and children, and they have offered new remedies to solve the problems created by the old. But the reinvention of marriage as an unenforceable contract has far deeper consequences than the mere "feminization of poverty," and it is long since time for us to begin thinking about the meaning of marriage as a social (as opposed to merely legal and economic) institution.

Marriage may begin in a contract (traditionally the agreement was more often between the families than between the boy and girl), but it is "a contract to transcend the standpoint of contract," as Hegel put it. Unlike most other contracts, the marriage bond is entered into in the expectation that it will be permanent and irrevocable. This was true even in the later Roman republic, where divorces were common (at least in the political class) and easy to procure. The permanency of marriage was and is sealed with the arrival of children whose needs are provided for by husband and wife. Since each child is, in genetics as well as in folklore, half of each parent, it is in the interest of both spouses to maintain the union and to care for the earthly bits of their own immortality. The sexual bond, while it is nourished in the pleasures of the bed and in intimate companionship, is essentially procreative, and while the procreative aspect of both sexuality and marriage can be overemphasized, as it has been by celibate theologians, those who attempt to divorce children from erotic pleasure are missing the point. It is only in the creation of children that man and woman succeed in the mystical goal of sexual experience: the merging of identities.

According to the old Christian and Jewish ideal, man and wife became one flesh. But to the Christian way of thinking, "one flesh" was not so much an ideal as a fact of life. St. Paul admonishes us to avoid fornication because erotic intimacy binds us, willy-nilly, in a permanent union. If one indiscretion brings us into bondage—as it does, at least in the permanent records of our memory and imagination—then cohabitation, with or without benefit of clergy or license, ties up our habits and our imaginings so tightly that, divorce or no, we can never cut ourselves free from what we were, so-and-so's man, the woman of such-and-such.

This same conclusion was arrived at recently by a feminist scholar, Terry Arendell, studying divorce:

> Many women "still felt married," regardless of whether they had any relationship with their former spouses. Divorce could not erase the memory of their married years or negate the presence of their children, who were a constant reminder of shared parenthood.

If marriage must be, by intention, a permanent union, what can we say of divorce? In one sense, divorce may be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impossible. If a serious woman has freely married a serious man, lived with him, born him children, what legal formula can undo such an experience? That there are exceptions to this description of marriage, no one doubts; and they have furnished plots for plays and novels through the ages: unconsummated unions, incestuous unions, marriages made under compulsion.

The ancient Jews recognized various justifications for divorce, and the more liberal rabbis were willing to grant it on the grounds that a man disliked his wife's cooking or had found a more attractive woman to marry. Jesus recognized both the difficulties of the situation and the bad faith of many husbands. Divorce, he said, was granted by Moses because of the hardness of the people's heart, but "if a man divorce a woman and marry another he commits adultery." Christian theologians have wrestled with this problem but with no conclusive results. It is fairly easy to specify the conditions under which a marital relationship should be terminated, as in cases of desertion, infidelity, and nonsupport, but do any of them justify remarriage?

Catholic theologians have tended to say no, while Protestants have adopted a more hopeful tone. Neither set of arguments is conclusive. If pre-Tridentine Catholics celebrated marriage as a sacrament, they also denigrated it as a second-best, a sop to human weakness; and if the Protestants were staunch defenders of the primacy of marriage as a social institution, they robbed the institution of its sacramental character and turned it over to the tender mercies of secular law.

In a mystical sense, the older theology of marriage was certainly correct: marriage creates a bond that cannot be broken, and there is no point in pretending that it can, or that we can find a genuine replacement for even a bad marriage. But we cannot always lead lives of perfection. Consider the case (real, not imagined) of a girl married at 16 to a husband who is quick to provide her with two children but reluctant to get a job, who in fact sends out his wife to work and beats her if she holds back money for the children's food. Any sane person would applaud her decision to throw the bum out, but is she morally entitled to marry again, assuming we take marriage seriously as a lifelong commitment?

Of course, we could mitigate her case by bringing up the youthful age at which she married, her eagerness to escape from harsh and (at least in her own mind) oppressive parents, and the seductive wiles practiced by the young man and his mother, who had prevailed upon the girl's innocence by constantly praising her son's virtues and proclaiming her belief that the marriage was predestined. But a marriage is a marriage, and while a girl of 16 can act foolishly, she is probably acting of her own free will in making so serious a decision. No, the mitigating circumstances change little.

But what of the children? They not only need the strong hand of a father; they would also benefit from the income of the hardworking man who has proposed marriage to the young divorcée—to say nothing of the benefit of having their mother at home for a longer time during the day. If the ultimate purpose of marriage is the begetting and rearing of children, a second marriage that helps the children ought to be acceptable as the lesser of two evils. The same principal might be applied to a father who needs a wife to take care of children deserted by their mother.

On a lower level, one might even make the case that a deserted man or woman is better off morally, if they find themselves a permanent companion and avoid the temptation to engage in frivolous erotic affairs. If the outcome is, on balance, a more temperate and more moral life, is it not possible to justify remarriage even when there are no children (provided, of course, that the divorcée is the innocent victim of a bad marriage)?

Real-life situations are rarely as simple as the examples in a Catholic marriage manual or as insoluble as the cases described in counseling texts, but if the primary objects of marriage are kept in mind, it should not be impossible for moral individuals to reach decisions that make the best of an admittedly bad situation. The universal primary object of marriage is children, and other important objects include companionship, the avoidance of promiscuity, and the social stability that is promoted by the unification of two families. (The last two objects are of comparatively little account in contemporary society.)

None of these purposes of marriage can be fulfilled except by a couple that intends to enter into a permanent union. The very expectation of permanence is self-fulfilling. While a skeptical critic of the institution compares marriage without divorce to a galley slave in which partners chained to the same oar are forced to get along with each other, no cooperative relationship is possible if either party is free to dissolve the partnership at a moment's notice.

That, at least, is the conclusion reached by George Axelrod in *The Evolution of Cooperation*. Axelrod's theory is derived from his study of the "Prisoner's Dilemma" game. The question he posed was which strategy, overall and in the long run, would work best in a series of choices confronting two imaginary prisoners being interrogated: should one "cooperate" with one's fellow prisoner by saying nothing or should one "defect." (The rules are actually more complicated.) Axelrod concluded that while more aggressive and dishonest strategies could succeed in the short run, ultimately the best strategy was "tit for tat": begin by cooperating and then repeat the other player's last move. If he cooperates, then cooperate. If he defects, you defect.

In addition to various restrictions and stipulations, Axelrod insists upon one caveat: the principle of cooperation only works if both parties expect to continue playing the game. Otherwise, the incentive to defect becomes too great. Axelrod applies his theory very narrowly to divorce proceedings by suggesting that cooperation between divorced parents can be enhanced if the custodial parent is given the power to withhold visitation rights from former spouses default on child support. There is obviously a much broader application. If husband and wife believe there is virtually no escape from marriage, they will not be so easily tempted into quarrels and infidelities.

Marriage can be viewed strictly on the low level of a commercial contract in which both parties will incur certain costs and benefits throughout the duration of the relationship. One or another party may have to forego certain present benefits and pay heavy costs with the expectation of being "paid back" in the future. The classic case is the wife

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who puts her husband through professional school, sacrificing her own educational ambitions, and bears several children, only to find herself abandoned in favor of a trophy wife, once her husband has a well-established career. In responding to the uncertain market situation presented by no-fault divorces, a spouse may choose to "invest less in this marriage or in being married," as Lloyd Cohen has stated. The result is a tendency toward fewer children and a greater investment in the wife's earning capacity.

In most of this discussion I have used "spouse" or "husband and wife" as if their situations were equal. In fact, they are not. In a modern society, all the advantages lie with the husband. The wife typically (although not always) is more concerned with the children and is more likely to be awarded exclusive or primary custody. The husband may be required to pay child-support (he may or may not comply) but not alimony, which is excluded by the doctrine of sexual equality. The liberalized divorce laws of the 1960's, therefore, plunged large numbers of women and their children into poverty, and the "feminization of poverty" became one of the cant terms of the 1980's.

So far the only response has been a largely rhetorical attack on defaulting fathers and a call for further socialization of domestic life along the lines of European family assistance plans that pay households a monthly stipend based on the number of dependent children.

There are problems with both plans. Defaulting fathers are immoral and irresponsible, and it would be very gratifying if we could round them up and squeeze the money out of them. However, it is not clear how many of them actually can afford to make the child-support payments stipulated in their divorce settlements nor what the collection costs would be to taxpayers. There is also a moral problem that has been created by the Supreme Court's decisions on abortion. Under current law, a husband and potential father has absolutely no say in whether or not a baby is born. The decision is made by a wife in consultation with her physician. Until this inequity is remedied, divorced fathers can make an excellent bad-faith case that they were only tangential to the child's existence.

Family assistance plans seem, on the surface, attractive, but setting aside the vast expense and social distortions that have accompanied the Swedish experiment in socialized childrearing (read my colleague Allan Carlson's recent book on this subject), the inevitable result of all such plans is to lessen, not increase, the sense of individual responsibility felt by parents. Even if such plans proved to be the only possible remedies in the postmodern world, they should only be considered as a desperate, final resort for a society beyond redemption.

A more practical approach to the problem would be to find a way to discourage husbands from walking out on their families. If marriage is only a contract, as it is so often said, then it ought to be no less than a contract.

There are two ways in which the marriage contract might be made more enforceable. The most obvious is the conservative proposal to strengthen the states' laws on divorce, especially since it is apparent that no-fault divorce laws serve to increase the rate of divorce. The strongest argument for repealing no-fault divorce is the fact that the costs are already socialized. As Judge Richard Neely points out in his book on divorce, "the loss inherent in the dissolution of a marriage is borne by others." By lowering the standard of living for women and children, a divorce makes them more likely to ask for public assistance. Children deprived of a mother or father are more likely to become delinquent or depressed. They do worse in school and are less likely to attend college. If and when they marry, the children of divorced parents are more likely to get divorced. Doesn't the community that pays the bills have a manifest right to enforce the contract?

But contract enforcement is not the same thing, necessarily, as state regulation. Historically, marriage and divorce have only occasionally been regulated by government. In democratic Athens and in the Roman republic, marriage was a bargain between families. There was no government authority to ratify or even record the bargain. Since the arrangements often involved dowries, a husband who divorced his wife might attempt to hold on to some of the money or property and his former wife (more likely her family) might have to sue to recover. But the government had no say in the actual divorce. Throughout much of the Middle Ages, marriage and dissolution were regulated by the Church, rather than the state, and a survey of the varieties of marriage customs that have existed around the world would not support the conclusion that political authority is the only or even the best vehicle for regulating marriage.

But, in the absence of government regulation, wives still enjoyed some measure of protection against the abuses of vicious or irresponsible husbands. Since marriage was a contract between families, a woman's male relatives took an interest in her well-being and that of her offspring. In comparatively small-scale societies, the community might display its approval or disapproval in various informal ways, ranging from gossip to shunning to violence. Colin Turnbull describes a sort of shivaree among the Mbuti pygmies: disapproving of an incestuous liaison in their camp, the Mbuti men talked themselves into an angry, quasi-religious demonstration in which they drove the male offender into the woods. In Europe and the United States, similar demonstrations might be arranged to show disapproval of inappropriate marriages, abusive husbands, and adultery.

Such informal devices have been used to express community sentiment all over the world. In a wholesome and organic society, it is by communal sanctions, rather than political enforcement, that the rules on marriage are maintained. Whether they are more or less effective than formal legal procedures is open to dispute. Individuals are not called upon to settle these questions of history and law; they must do what they can within the circumstances they find themselves. We cannot, by our individual efforts, change society, its laws, or its institutions. We can, however, live up to what we believe.

If the ideal remains a stable marriage that is the basis of an autonomous family, how is it possible to realize that ideal under the terms of "late capitalism," when even the consumption functions of the household—eating, housecleaning, laundry—are routinely handled by outside providers, and when all the functions of intellectual instruction, moral guidance, and even such things as entertainment can be discharged by public officials and paid professionals? But

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these extra-familial services are only available; they are not mandatory.

It is still possible to educate one's children at home or in private schools. Such things are difficult and expensive, because families are required to pay taxes to support government schools; the choice is, however, open to most people, and in a period of marked decline in the quality of all schools, private as well as public, homeschooling becomes ever more attractive to more people. The same can be said of home production, which can include everything from part-time typing and maid services to large mail-order businesses. At the simplest level, it is the home vegetable garden. Where families work together, where the group's economic success depends upon the contribution of all the members, a cohesion is achieved that is otherwise very difficult.

There is obviously no single formula to fit all circumstances. Many families have passions for outdoor life—camping, hunting, fishing—on which they spend a great deal of time together. For others it may be music or tennis. Many might like the idea of teaching at home or running a family business, but either their circumstances or their lack of aptitude are an obstacle. What is important is not the details but the main objective, a family that sees itself as an indissoluble mystical entity like the Trinity: multiple persons but fundamentally one.

For those who take this deep view of family life and understand the consequences of divorce, their commitment to family is more than a question of staying married, because we are inevitably forced to deal with other people who do not share our perspective. But even in the absence of community sanctions, it is still possible to act as if such sanctions existed and to communicate our sense of propriety to family and friends.

Divorce was once viewed as shameful, and the divorcé had to make a case for himself that he was an innocent victim. We can still act on that assumption. We can still avoid the company of men and women who have treated marriage as if it were a matter of no importance. Within the small communities in which most of us spend our lives—church congregations, PTAs, and social clubs—we might even make some headway in getting our views acknowledged, and if our church has hardened its heart, we can always find a congregation with a firmer commitment to the moral order.

We can reasonably anticipate the results of the decisions and gestures we make in private life, but the consequences of new marriage regulations cannot easily be foreseen. Radical feminists might succeed in writing laws that are punitive against husbands—providing, in effect, further disincentives to marriage. Alternatively, family might become entirely an extension of government welfare programs, subject to unremitting scrutiny and regulation. To avoid these potentially dangerous consequences, it might be better to concentrate on the contract itself. Two states, at least, have introduced bills to legalize prenuptial contracts eliminating no-fault divorce for the parties that enter into them. In Illinois a proposed "Marriage Contract Act" declares that "Two persons of the opposite sex may . . . enter into a marriage contract providing that the marital relationship will not be dissolved or otherwise modified except on a showing by a preponderance of the evidence by one party of the fault of the other party that constitutes grounds for the dissolution."

Although the Illinois bill passed the state senate, it got lost in the other house. Nonetheless, such measures are gaining in popularity and might provide a general strategy for solving the problem of divorce. The terms for child custody and support, alimony, and visitation could all be spelled out, and a rich doctor who deserts the wife who put him through school might find himself paying her half his income *plus* child-support payments. An adulterous wife might, on the other hand, forfeit all claims to see her children and be required to pay for a housekeeper or nanny. A young woman or young man would be ill-advised to enter into such a contract lightly and would very likely call upon the wisdom and experience of his parents. This in itself would help to restore some measure of the old family autonomy and move marriage back in the direction of a contract between families. Of course, men and women would be free not to make such contracts, but a party who refused would fall under immediate suspicion.

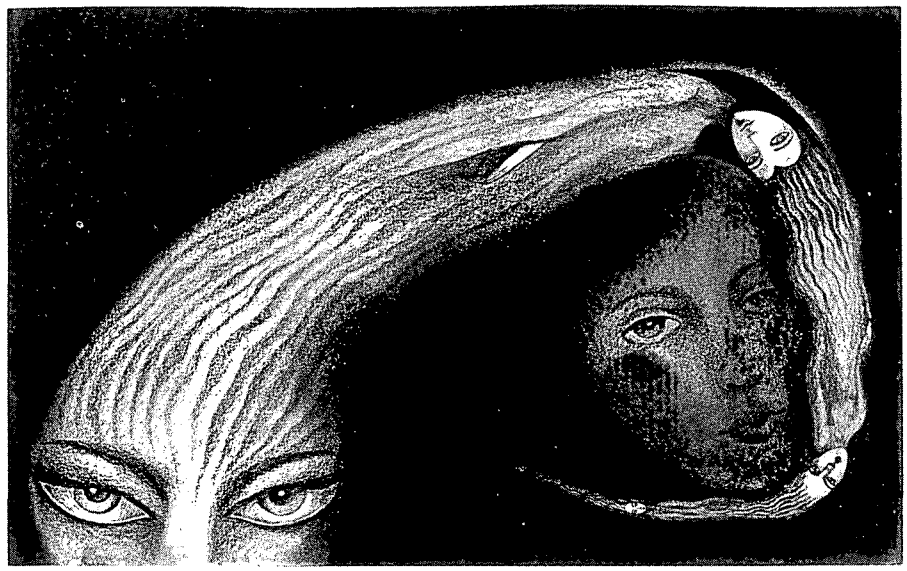
The old feminism of the past 150 years has represented the penetration of rootless individualism into the domestic sphere. Inevitably this has brought government into the bedroom in ways undreamed of by the Moral Majority. The net effect of feminist legislation has been the destruction of family and community life and the empowerment of government at the expense of men and women, husbands and wives. That, at least, is how I read the important work of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese.

The world is changing, however, and shifting gears. A few years ago, the fatuities of Francis Fukuyama were being repeated on prime-time television, and "the end of history" was all the rage among Americans too lazy to think for themselves. While the Blooming idiots of the American right were celebrating this new revolution, we here were predicting ethnic conflict and the repeal of the Versailles Treaty.

The shift of gears I referred to has meant that for the time being the centrifugal forces in Western societies are gaining upon the centripetal forces of centralized and concentrated power. Part of the shift has been a dawning awareness of the indispensability of community for human life, and the primary community institution is the family. Whether we have called ourselves conservatives or Marxists, feminists or patriarchs, most sensible people have begun to realize that the only alternatives to the family are the total state and, increasingly, the youth gang.

Children without parents can never grow up to be fully human, neither can men without women nor women without men. The divorce revolution has been a rebellion against the most basic terms of human life, but what government has done, it can never undo, except by resigning the powers it has usurped. Reforming the law would provide only marginal relief to the victims of divorce. In reconsidering marriage and divorce, our main objective, as serious men and women, must be to teach ourselves, our children, and our friends, that these things are up to us, not government, to decide. To use the language of our libertarian friends, it may be time to reprivatize private life. ©

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Incredible Shrinking Woman

by Janet Scott Barlow

Movies, according to conventional wisdom, reflect society. And so they do. Politically, movies often reflect the perspective of Hollywood artistes who think they possess a gift for reflecting society. Commercially, movies reflect not only audience taste but what some director or studio executive assumes is audience taste; they reflect not only what we're willing to buy but what someone else believes—hopes—is marketable. This odd combination of marketing guesswork and artistic pretension is more evident in movies than in any other form of popular entertainment, and it results in, among other things, film "realism" that has nothing to do with reality. This is especially so in current movies about women.

In an adolescence that spanned the late 50's and early 60's, I had movie interests rooted in the late 30's and early 40's, the reason being that everything about the women in those movies was better. Carole Lombard was funnier than Doris Day; Irene Dunne was warmer in her femininity than Grace Kelly; Barbara Stanwyck was a better actress than Natalie Wood. There was nothing premeditated about Katharine Hepburn's quirkiness, nothing self-conscious in Myrna Loy's valor. Rosiland Russell was faster on her feet than anybody before or since, and Bette Davis could handle anything. Collectively, those actresses, and the roles they played, resonated wit, confidence, courage, independence, and—not the least of it—a desire to please, which is not quite the same as a desire to be liked (and which explains why it is more entertaining to watch an old Jean Arthur movie than a new Sally Field movie).

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from Cincinnati.

The actresses of the Golden Age were unique in their desire to please, in that the desire was wedded to intelligence, a combination that gave them female size and also precluded any compromise of their status as human beings—that they could be hurt made them people, not victims. Both their willingness to give and their intelligence shone best in their humor. They were funny women and they were good company, to their male counterparts on screen as well as to their audience. Too clever to be merely in on the joke, they often drove the joke; too generous—and too self-assured—to keep the fun to themselves, they spread it around, making their humor a bond, not a wall. As the constricted "Hopsy" Pike in *The Lady Eve*, Henry Fonda says to Barbara Stanwyck, "Snakes are my life, in a way." When she responds, after the most exquisite pause, "What a life," she is entertaining herself, us, and, she can only hope, the clueless "Hopsy."

Now flash forward about fifty years, to *Postcards From the Edge*, and watch Meryl Streep's comic turn with Dennis Quaid. Quaid is as irrelevant as the audience, since Streep is talking to herself, about herself, in a movie that explores her character's relationship *with* herself. It is a film, like so many today, that presents female confusion as a sign of moral superiority, a film pumped full of feelings but drained of heart. The movie is not meant to be experienced; it is meant to be overheard. (*Postcards From the Edge* was directed by Mike Nichols, who appears to believe he possesses a gift for reflecting society, probably because reviewers are very nice about ignoring the fact that all of his films display a nearly creepy detachment from their subject. Every Mike Nichols movie feels like two movies: the one he makes to amuse his friends, and the other one that is meant for paying

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

customers.)

Except for their human and female credibility, nothing about the movie women I loved in my adolescence—not the way they talked, looked, dressed, or lived—reminded me much of the women in my own life. That is, it was not necessary to identify with them in order to understand them. Those women, and their movies, were for me the opposite of current film fare: they reflected reality without realism.

But I was yanked out of the black-and-white past by the popularity of Marilyn Monroe, a phenomenon that was as difficult to miss as it was to understand. Monroe was not about reality, or realism either. She was a fantasy figure who was not worth the effort it took to suspend disbelief. The pleasure of her cinematic beauty was always spoiled by her film persona. She was insulted on screen by people Barbara Stanwyck would have had for breakfast. Rotten men took advantage of her, and good men had to find charity in their hearts in order not to. By her own choosing, she was laughed at, not with.

Today, of course, Monroe is a feminist icon, an actress whose private life is supposed to add poignancy to her screen persona, a woman whose image as a "dumb blonde" rouses feminist ire. Why this is the case is a mystery to me. Marilyn Monroe *was* a dumb blonde, and made every public effort, in movies and out of them, to project herself as such. For taking her at her word, "society" is now implicated in her death, just as "society" is implicated in her death for *not* taking her at her word. For Monroe, we are now told, also wanted privacy and wished to be taken seriously for her mind, two needs the public would not honor. Unless you are a feminist desperate to fill your victim list, it hardly needs pointing out that a woman who desires privacy and intellectual respect places "society" in a real bind when she puts on a flesh-colored dress and publicly coos "Happy Birthday" to the President of the United States.

Feminists now exploit Marilyn Monroe's vulnerableness as shamelessly in death as sexist men exploited it in life, revealing in the process what modern feminism has never understood: most women consider the experience of womanhood too important to be politicized and the subject of female abuse too serious to be romanticized. Marilyn Monroe had gone from sex object to political tool, and the latter makes her seem no less pathetic, no less "used," than the former.

Once a phenomenon, an image, a symbol has been explored and reexplored ad nauseam, there is nothing left but to find the current "logical extension" of that phenomenon, image, or symbol. Many would argue that the logical extension of Marilyn Monroe is Madonna, another overtly sexual performer, but one for a liberated age, a woman in "control" (the word used endlessly) of her life, her career, and her "art." The first flaw in the Monroe-to-Madonna theory is, of course, that Madonna is not a movie star—she has no film identity. The big screen is still unmatched as a vehicle for creating or revealing a persona—a vehicle for capturing charisma—and Madonna's acting ambitions prove she knows it. (And sorry, but self-starring documentaries do not count.) The second problem is that Marilyn Monroe was not intellectualized until after her death. As a living actress and a movie star, she belonged first to her audience. Madonna is a rock star-turned-social event, and her initial audience, which was made up of adolescents, has been replaced, for her image if not her recordings, by professional feminists, who love displays of female sexuality without "vulnerability" (it evens the score for Marilyn); by the media, who are easy marks for any performer who lacks the nerve (or the creative imagination, or simply the talent) *not* to shock; and by a collection of lightweight social observers who require nothing more than the trigger of a celebrity's "contradictions" to become intellectually engaged. This audience shift is important because it is doubtful that the discretionary income of professional feminists, journalists, or intellectuals is spent on Madonna records.

To realize how irrelevant Madonna is becoming to adolescents, one need look no further than *The Hollywood Reporter's* description of her documentary *Truth or Dare* as a box-office "disappointment." If the movie was a commercial disappointment, it was because kids did not flock to see it; and if kids did not flock to see it, it is probably because they do not care anymore, if they ever did, whether it is "truth" or not. Adolescents want their rebels to exist without conditions, and Madonna's professional pose becomes more conditional all the time: while she will permit an audience to be pleased by her, it is beneath her to *want* to please. Those conditions may inspire feminists and fascinate intellectuals (and explain, by the way, why Madonna is so bad at comedy), but sooner or later most kids just want to dance.

It is now for America's mature thinkers, from those at the *National Review* to the ones at the *New Republic*, to explore the "meaning" of simulated masturbation onstage, and a breathless nation can only await the further dispensation of their insights. (The Middle East, the recession, race relations, Madonna. Makes sense to me.) In the meantime, the problem for *living* legends is that they can dissipate their own mystique; they have the capacity to disappoint, to alienate, and, most dangerous of all, to bore. When it happens to Madonna, she—and the mature thinkers—will be the last to know.

After twenty-five years of feminist cultural influence, this is Hollywood's first Big Statement for and about women; death is not so bad when you share it.

If Madonna is not the logical extension of Marilyn Monroe, who is? If you saw the movie *Thelma and Louise* you have the answer. *Thelma and Louise* is about two dumb women—redheads this time, not blondes. Yes, they are insulted by people Barbara Stanwyck (and Madonna too) would have had for breakfast. Yes, rotten men take advantage of them; and if good men do not have to find charity in their hearts in order not to, it is only because there are no good men. (Screenwriter Callie Khouri has stated that her movie "isn't hostile toward men. It's hostile toward idiots." Since most "serious" movies, including this one, are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over-analyzed, it would be nice to believe her—but I don't. The "idiots" in this film aren't idiots, they're slime. And they're unmistakably *male* slime.) Through a series of literally incredible decisions—how many women do you know who, after experiencing sexual assault and witnessing murder, would plead to pick up a male hitchhiker?—Thelma and Louise find themselves in ever worsening circumstances that allow no recourse but repeated criminal violence and, finally, suicide. But the important thing is, they do it *together*.

After twenty-five years of feminist cultural influence, this is Hollywood's first Big Statement for and about women; death is not so bad when you share it. Hear the echoes? If Marilyn Monroe killed herself because her pride, specifically her female pride, was lost, Thelma and Louise kill themselves because pride is the one thing they have left. Suicide as sisterhood.

Thelma and Louise is astonishing as a feminist statement not because its heroines resort to behavior feminists assail in men—that is, expedient and gratuitous violence against the opposite sex. Feminists are habitually self-contradictory (and were, unsurprisingly, divided in their public reaction to a film that mythologized female violence). The movie is astonishing because its heroines are so relentlessly, hopelessly stupid. No less than Marilyn Monroe, they are female caricatures. Unlike Monroe, however, they are expected to be laughed with, not at. *Thelma and Louise* is a grossly sentimental movie.

The great female dramas of the 30's and 40's often ended with a close-up of an actress's face. Only the emotion on the faces of Greta Garbo or Bette Davis or Ingrid Bergman was sufficient to capture their experience and finalize their stories; and only something as large as a movie screen was sufficient to accommodate their faces. Heartbroken, resolute, resigned, or hopeful, those faces were a movie's human emblem. By contrast, the end of *Thelma and Louise* comes when the two women drive to their deaths off a cliff. The camera is very far away and the image is frozen: two people in a car, a vehicle, suspended over a canyon, a void. Were it not for the presence of the vehicle and the void, the scene would have no meaning—thus the remoteness of the camera. And thus the fact that the two women at the center of the movie are, at its climax, so small, so indistinct as to be unrecognizable. They are very, very tiny.

That frozen moment in *Thelma and Louise* is the capstone of decades of female diminution on screen. On film, if not in life, women have shrunk. The progression of movies into exercises of realism over reality has rendered women indistinguishable—visually incidental to the effect of an automobile suspended over a canyon, subservient in their potential for common sense to the demands of an irrational plot, subordinate in their human complexity and pain to the imperatives of sexual politics: cinematic midgets.

More than once in *Thelma and Louise*, the supposedly worldly-wise Louise says to the flea-brained Thelma, "You get what you settle for." Ain't it the truth. That should be the slogan of moviegoers weary of films filled with tiny women. ◈

Leaving the Wasatch

by Ruth Moose

Still snow in June
on the streaked peaks
sharp as an egg tooth
and Salt Lake, the city
clustered for comfort.
In the gleam of things
that eggwhite temple roof
and the spires of Beneficial Life
could be an answer
but I know the truth
is painted as pine.
Swirled faux alabaster
can fool you at first,
even the world's greatest doubter
backed away from the gates
like they'd lock two ways.
Resisted too much the gift
without a tag attached.
But it has held,
as few things do,
the pine painted alabaster,
snow on the Wasatch
and silver wings
with me between.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who Is Sylvia? What Is She?

by R.S. Gwynn

Some Thoughts on American Women Poets

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Unlike the situation of only a few decades ago, the position occupied today by women poets in American literary culture is so prominent, the range of their subjects and styles so wide, that it has become virtually impossible to make any generalizations about them or their work except to note that in diversity must lie strength. Indeed, the women poets who win the major awards and garner the most serious critical attention are, like their male counterparts, graduates of university writing programs and employees of the same and are thus subject to the same career pressures—the urgent need to publish in quantity to satisfy department heads, promotion committees, and deans—that currently afflict most contemporary poets. It is absurd for any American poet, male or female, to complain that opportunities for publication, receipt of grants, or employment might be limited by such matters as gender, sexual preference, ethnic background, or even the subject matter about which he or she chooses to write. There are over three hundred university creative writing programs in this country and something like ten times that number of magazines publishing poetry. When the year's output of new poetry books comes rolling in, as they have each December since 1987 when I began to write "The Year in Poetry" for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook*, it is a sure bet that at least half of them will be written by women.

If, however, we go back into the not-so-distant past, we find that this fecundity is relatively new, for it is easy to pigeonhole the select few women poets who were appearing in the poetry anthologies of the 1940's and 1950's, most of which seem to have been edited by the same hand, that of the ubiquitous Oscar Williams. Of course, Emily Dickinson is represented, usually the sole representative of women of the 19th century, but there is a gap of about thirty years between her birth and that of the next small cluster of women. These poets fall into two classes. The first, which includes Marianne Moore, H.D., and Amy Lowell, comprises a small number of poets of major status who either were present at the birth of modernism or grew up during its first two decades. H.D. was a college friend of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, and Lowell became such a great popularizer of Pound's imagist strictures that her epigones were often referred to as "Amygists." Moore, unquestionably the greatest of these and a major stylist by almost anyone's reckoning, was the influential poetry editor of *The Dial* and, in her twilight years, became something of a media celebrity, sought out by the Ford Motor Company to assist in naming a new car (which, alas, ended up as the Edsel!) and, on another occasion, trading rhymes over lunch with Cassius Clay. All three of these poets were born in the 19th century; despite their influence, the next generation, those born roughly between the turn of the century and 1930, did not come close to reaching the same heights. If we are to take the eleven poets of this century treated in the PBS *Voices & Visions* series as representing the accepted canon, then only Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) measures up.

But these were by no means all of the women poets on the scene. A second group, predominantly lyrical in their mode of expression, had even higher visibility, fulfilling in more traditional manner the public expectations of the role. Edna St. Vincent Millay, the quintessential Greenwich Village Bohemian, soared to the best-seller lists with slim volumes of sonnets marrying conservative technique to the ethos of what used to be called the New Woman. Elinor Wylie, Sara Teasdale, Léonie Adams, and Gene Derwood

R.S. Gwynn is a professor of English at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Mrs. Oscar Williams)—all little read today—reached a considerable public and surely inspired many an imitative sonnet penned by sensitive teenage girls in the hinterlands—Anne Sexton was one of them—whose only exposure to serious poetry came through popular magazines and anthologies edited by those two poetic Barnums, Williams and Louis Untermeyer. Read today, however, they seem decidedly lace-curtain, the last inheritors of the genteel Victorian traditions of Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Only Millay still receives a grudging page or two in most modernist anthologies.

How much the role of the woman poet has changed, and in such a short span of time, might best be demonstrated by a bit of personal experience. Some fifteen years ago I participated in an informal group of six or seven poets that met monthly in the living room of one of the members. I suppose that the group did not differ much from hundreds like it; the members would distribute copies of their poems, read them aloud, and then, between the passing of onion dip and the pouring of wine, discuss their strengths and weaknesses. The workshop-cum-group-therapy approach to everything, from psychotherapy to poetry, has become a commonplace in contemporary American society, and it is rare to encounter an adult who is not a past or present member of some kind of support group.

This group, however, was far from unsophisticated; one member was a retired professor of creative writing who had recently produced a chapbook, and all of the other members have gone on to publish either individual collections of poetry or substantial numbers of poems in periodicals. The group was also fairly well balanced by age, gender, and (insofar as I can judge) sexual preference and contained at least one bona fide member of a minority group. I mention all this merely to underline the significance of an exchange that occurred at one of the meetings, an incident that reveals much about the directions that poetry by women has taken in recent years.

One of the members had written a poem that contained in the title the word "poetess," apparently used without irony. The other members made some comments on such matters as line-breaks and punctuation, but no one, male or female, mentioned "poetess" until I suggested to the author that he was likely to give offense in certain circles if he used it, that, in fact, he would be lucky to escape alive. I held no particular case for or against the word per se—is "actress" any worse?—and as far as I was concerned it summoned up only the faintly ridiculous specter of some pale young thing dressed in black declaiming breathless quatrains to the moon—the female equivalent of Ernie Kovacs' "Percy Dovetonsils." On the other hand, several women academics of my acquaintance had recently made it clear that they considered the term not only quaint but sexist as well. My friend seemed genuinely surprised to be told this, and even the women in the group seemed to have no strong feelings on the subject, a reaction it is almost impossible to imagine today.

When, exactly, did women poets stop thinking of themselves as poetesses? Or did they ever? My edition of the OED contains one citation that is anything but pejorative: "Among the ancients Sappho . . . was called 'the poetess,' as Homer was called 'the poet.'" Nevertheless, most of the examples in *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* mention its history of giving offense, with one commentator noting its "suggestion of tepid and insipid achievement" and another its connection with "female-ghetto poetry." Interestingly, one of the last notable uses of the word occurs in the *Voices & Visions* segment on Sylvia Plath, when she speaks in an interview of Anne Sexton as "the American poetess . . . who writes about her experience as a mother . . . who has had a nervous breakdown." At other times, Plath mentioned her own desires to become "the Poetess of America," which is perhaps to say that she felt herself to be in serious competition only with other women poets, the most prominent of whom she referred to as that "little, round and stumpy" Adrienne Cecile Rich.

Since Plath and Sexton are the twin cornerstones upon which contemporary American women's poetry has been built, we must gauge their reputations carefully. Measured solely by the effect of their careers on other writers and on the course of literary history, they must be ranked among the most influential artists of the century. Yet theirs is an influence that rests more on the iconic significance of their lives than on the intrinsic value of the work they produced. Less than thirty years after Plath's suicide in 1963, five book-length biographical works and an even greater number of critical studies have appeared. Sexton, who killed herself in 1974, has spawned a like amount of criticism, and Diane Wood Middlebrook's recent biography has produced as much controversy as any similar recent study of a politician or celebrity in its reliance on material that has traditionally been off limits to the biographer. In the popular mind, at least, Plath and Sexton are forever linked as the two most important female members of the so-called confessional school of poetry.

Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton met in the spring of 1959 when they both participated in a creative writing seminar run by Robert Lowell at Boston University. On several occasions they shared cocktails after class, where, as Sexton characteristically put it, they "would talk at length about our first suicides." Thereafter, they corresponded from time to time, exchanging poems and news, and, after Plath's death, Sexton published a rather self-serving elegy addressed to her ("Thief!— / how did you crawl into, / crawl down alone / into the death I wanted so badly and for so long.") in her Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of 1966, *Live or Die*. But beyond this acquaintance, they shared few similarities either in their lives or in their poetry.

When they met, Plath, with degrees from Smith and Cambridge, was a driven perfectionist who had been consciously preparing herself for a literary career since her early teens. Married to British poet Ted Hughes (now Poet Laureate), she strove to excel in several roles—poet, wife, mother-to-be—and, in many ways, seemed the embodiment of the all-American overachiever, the grown-up version of the little girl who *always* has her homework. Sexton, on the other hand, was a middle-class housewife with a history of emotional problems who had recently begun writing poetry on the advice of her psychiatrist. Lacking an adequate formal education, she was a poetic autodidact whose talents did not find expression until she had two daughters and was nearing the end of her 20's.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Plath, living in England with only one volume of poetry and a pseudonymous novel published during her life, had barely begun to reach her public when she killed herself at 30, whereas Sexton, with major prizes, honorary degrees, and seven volumes of verse published by the time of her death, tasted about as much celebrity as America is likely to lavish on a poet. Plath's suicide was long premeditated—she had failed in one attempt, treated as fiction in *The Bell Jar*, during the summer after her junior year in college—and was probably spurred by the stresses wrought by a marital separation, the demands of two small children, and a host of physical and psychological ills. Sexton, her children grown and her long marriage ended at her own instigation, was addicted to alcohol and pills and seemed a burnt-out case many years before her actual death. The likelihood was small, given the negative critical response to her volumes after *Live or Die*, that she would ever again write at her best.

The first biographical study of Plath was A. Alvarez's memoir in his best-selling 1971 study of writers and suicide, *The Savage God*, published the same year as the first American edition of *The Bell Jar*. Five years later appeared Edward Butscher's full-length biography, *Sylvia Plath: Method and Madness*, the first of five books on Plath that were to meet with varying degrees of resistance from her estate, which was controlled by her husband and his sister, Olwyn Hughes. Because of opposition from the estate, Linda Wagner-Martin's *Sylvia Plath: A Biography* of 1987 is almost devoid of quotations from Plath's published writing, as are two further studies published in 1991, Ronald Hayman's *The Death and Life of Sylvia Plath* and Paul Alexander's *Rough Magic: A Biography of Sylvia Plath*.

To this date, the only biography to have the full cooperation of the Hughes family is Anne Stevenson's *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath*, which credits Olwyn Hughes to the degree that Stevenson calls it "almost a work of dual authorship." Because Stevenson had permission to quote at will, *Bitter Fame* is the only one of these books to integrate fully Plath's poetry with the parallel events she notes in her journal and in her letters to her mother, both of which have appeared in selected editions. Depending on the reader's predisposition to view Plath as either a hapless victim of a ruthlessly dominating husband or as an incarnation of a first-class bitch-goddess, one can find a Sylvia for almost any occasion in these books. Butscher's book focuses on Plath's childhood and on the trauma of her father's death when she was eight, an event that Butscher regards as the key to understanding both her life and her poetry. "Daddy," of course, is her best-known poem, and even though little in it can be taken as fact it provides us with insight into the way in which Plath equated her husband's abandonment of her with the crushing loss she experienced in her childhood. Wagner-Martin, on the other hand, gives us a protofeminist Sylvia, one who might have survived if only she had been able to find a nurturing sisterhood to give her aid and comfort during her year of the pig. In Wagner-Martin's view, the tone of Plath's poetry is not so much irrational wrath as righteous indignation. Anne Stevenson's Sylvia, by several lengths the juiciest portrait of the five, is an obsessive termagant, constantly demanding the full attention and ardor of her exasperated, compliant husband and throwing embarrassing little snits when she does not get her way. Stevenson appends three short memoirs by acquaintances of Plath—Lucas Meyers, Dido Merwin, and Richard Murphy—and they go a long way toward displacing what Stevenson labels as two misconceived views of her life and character: one that sees her, in W.S. Merwin's words, as "the pathetic victim of [Ted Hughes'] heartless mistreatment" and another, which wishes to "assess her contribution to the feminist movement as being politically of the same order as that, say, of Adrienne Rich." Depending on which version one reads, either St. Sylvia or St. Ted emerges as the protagonist of the mystery play.

The two studies of Plath that appeared in 1991 do not add much in the way of substance to this twisted hagiography. Hayman's book, in its very title, tells us where his true fascination with the subject rests, and the result reads like one of those Jim Bishop *The Day . . . Died* books. Hayman refers to a mysterious man in a dark suit who appears at the inquest following Plath's suicide and even assigns sinister motives to such trivial matters as Ted Hughes' errors in dating poems by Plath that have appeared in her posthumous collections. Alexander's *Rough Magic* is the New Age version, replete with portentous tarot readings, creepy Ouija sessions at home with Sylvia and Ted, and the implication that the abusive (in this version) Hughes' penchant for posthypnotic suggestion might have led to Plath's suicide. All these books lack is a bloody finger pointing to possible CIA involvement in Plath's death; I would not be terribly surprised to hear that Hayman's and Alexander's books have been optioned by Oliver Stone for *Sylvia*, a bio-pic starring Meryl Streep and Mel Gibson; or that yet one more "definitive" biography is in the works, this one by Kitty Kelley.

Neither Anne Sexton's poetry nor her life is likely to draw this level of attention. Her poetry, which is generally more accessible than Plath's dense texture of sonic richness, mythical allusions, and autobiographical subtext, does not demand a great deal of exegesis and often borrows shamelessly from other poets, including Plath. Compare "My cheeks blossomed with maggots. / I picked at them like pearls" from *Live or Die* with Plath's "They had to call and call / And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls" from the earlier *Ariel*. Because Sexton is so relentlessly autobiographical—"confessional," in the most plebeian sense of the term—there is not a great deal of mystery about the sources of her poems, even though a biography may salve the reader's curiosity by filling in names and dates. Diane Middlebrook's *Anne Sexton* does a great deal of that but otherwise can never quite transcend the fundamentally dreary suburban routine of cocktails at five and fisticuffs by eight—no matter how often punctuated by hectic and boozy reading tours, numerous short-term affairs and subsequent nervous collapses, and fleeting moments of acclaim—that emerges as the dominant chord in Sexton's marital life.

The controversy surrounding the book's two most startling revelations, that Sexton's psychiatrist allowed tape recordings of her therapy sessions to be used by the biographer and that Sexton was both victim and instigator of episodes of incest, seems mostly a publisher's ploy to build sales on Geraldo-style sensationalism. To my knowledge, no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literary biographer has ever made use of intimate medical information in this way, but it seems doubtful that Sexton would have wished it suppressed, or at least that is the view of her daughter Linda Gray Sexton, who is also her literary executor. Since Sexton originally saw her poetry as an extension of her therapy sessions and never, to my mind, was able to distance and mythologize herself as Plath did, there is not that much difference between the content of the tapes and that of her poetry. As far as the incest question goes, Middlebrook relies, either naively or disingenuously, on Sexton's own vague and contradictory stories of childhood cuddling at bedtime with Nana, a great aunt, and on some hazily remembered ("Only later did Linda realize . . .") episodes related by Sexton's elder daughter. The latter charges, according to Linda Gray Sexton's own account, surfaced only when Middlebrook was writing about *Mercy Street*, a Sexton play about incest: "If I didn't tell her about this, I would be doing her a disservice." The claim that Sexton herself had been a childhood incest victim, however, raised the ire of two cousins, who defended Nana in an angry letter to the *New York Times Book Review*. Sexton, they claimed, was notoriously untruthful in almost every aspect of her life and had such a flair for self-dramatization that one could not rely on her version of almost *any* event. This view, I must add, jibes closely with that of several of her acquaintances, who have told me that she simply could not be trusted to know the difference between truth and fantasy. Middlebrook, much too eager to portray Sexton as a victim, seems to take too many of her statements without the necessary block of salt.

How influential have the lives of these poets been? Very. A generation of very young women poets has now grown up with Plath and Sexton looming large in the post-modernist canon; it should surprise no one that these poets have assimilated their elders as thoroughly as their mothers and grandmothers might have absorbed Teasdale and Millay. I am looking at the contributors' notes in the most recent issue of *Pulse*, Lamar University's literary magazine, and I note that Stacy Lynette Dickey, a freshman, lists Sylvia Plath as her favorite writer. Here, quoted with her permission, is her poem "I Carved Your Crutches":

I carved your crutches today
With the sharpness of my hands;
Split and cut the wood perfectly
To your height
So you won't have to adjust them
The splinters inserted themselves
  inside my tender flesh
  as redness trickled down my hands,
  across my wrists,
  and changed the whiteness of my shirt
I think my tweezers did the trick,
The soreness escaped my skin
I only hope the wood is dry,
  so you don't stain your clothes.

The apostrophe to the unfeeling other, the notion of the poem as failed gift or tribute (compare "The Colossus"), the references to deformity, the focus on self-inflicted physical pain — these are the touchstones of Plath's poetry. If this is a love poem (and I think it is) it is love among the ruins of the Western lyrical tradition. Without the long shadow of Sylvia Plath, Ms. Dickey's poem might have well been yet another variation on the theme of "Love is not all; it is not meat and drink."

In 1972, responding to a question in an interview about the differences between poetry by male and female students, Richard Wilbur observed that in his own student days "poetry was associated by some with effeminacy" and that some male poets overstressed their masculinity to reassure both their public and themselves. "There's none of that any more. I'm very sure it's possible to distinguish between male and female sensibilities — but I should think that there's now no subject matter that you would expect to find in a man's book but not in a woman's." What Wilbur, or no one for that matter, could have foreseen is the degree to which women have rejected their own brand of "effeminacy," that is, the high-toned lyricism of the poetesses of their grandparents' era. One can scarce imagine a male poet writing a poem about how he and his three-year-old son compare the size and shape of their sexual organs, but that is exactly what Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Rita Dove does in a poem from her recent collection *Grace Notes*. Would a male poet dare to write about the joys of [censored]? Read "Love in Blood Time" in Sharon Olds's *The Gold Cell*. Would an otherwise straight male poet risk ridicule by writing an extended narrative graphically describing a sexual encounter with a partner of the same sex? Carolyn Forché does, in a book that won the Yale Younger Poets award. With titles like "Menstruation at Forty," "In Praise of My Uterus," or "Ballad of the Lonely Masturbator," Anne Sexton showed the way to a whole generation of women poets. "If Anne had stuck around another ten years," said an admiring Erica Jong, "the world might have caught up with her." Whether Robert Bly will lead a new revolution in poetry by men is yet to be seen, but thus far male poets have largely feared to tread where Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and their followers have been walking for years.

Blackberries

by Gloria Whelan

Afraid the barbs and thorns will flay my skin
there is a moment when I hesitate,
these armored berries hug the ground within
a cage of briars to ripen slow and late.
They fill their winey goblets full of dew,
a purple jewel against a breast of moss,
the final gift before the summer's through
and night comes fast and air is sharp with loss.
My hands are stained with berry juice and blood
but rich the taste; the scrapes and stabs will mend
and memories of August's honeyed food
will make of winter's chill a warmer friend.
  When have we not been glad we risked the pain
  for joy is sweet upon its prickly cane.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fourth of July

A Short Story

by Kit Reed

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

I am so deathly afraid of those women.

Strawberry pie again, Eleanor, how nice. Pity it didn't set.

Every Fourth of July I vow not to, but sooner or later I sit down and cry. I used to cry the minute Philo came in the kitchen with the strawberries; he would start to hull them, thinking it was the work I was crying about, having to make seven pies. For the life of me I couldn't make him understand. "Come on, honey," he would say to me. "It's only my family."

No matter how early we start for the camp on the island we always get there late and they are all down on the dock waiting, his brothers and sisters and their families, all those blunt Maine faces in one place at one time, all those watery Goodman eyes, those huge Goodman women watching: Philo's sisters Marge and Edna, standing foursquare with Ralph's broad wife, Benjy's bride.

Oh Eleanor, strawberry pie.

When they all know his sisters won't let my bread on the picnic table, and only blood relatives get to make the beans. I begged them to let me bring potato salad but Benjy's wife Lane gets to do it, that hasn't been in the family half as long as me. Everybody else does such a good job that there are never any leftovers, but the pie comes last, and there's no telling with pies. Either something goes wrong with the crust or the filling or else I get them almost perfect and something happens, people rush out or get too full to eat them and I have all those leftovers reminding me there is something the matter with the way I do things and all the way home Philo grumbling; I hate the pies.

They look lovely, Eleanor. Too bad Randolph couldn't be here, but I suppose in his business . . . Well Randolph is in New York and it's hard for him to get away, you know these actors; they don't. *How come we never see him on TV?* Then one of those big old girls sighs and says, "Pity Evvie can't be here."

What they mean is, Poor Eleanor, all those years and nothing to show, when our own sons bring their wives and all their children. They would come a thousand miles to be with us. Every Fourth of July there is another grandbaby when all you have is poor Evelyn that Philo won't even let us mention in his hearing, and that fancy boy.

Last year Marge was scraping leftovers into the garbage; she stopped what she was doing for a minute, so dreamy I don't even know if she heard what was coming out of her mouth. "You know, your girl Evelyn's been gone for so long I don't know if I remember what she looks like. —Oh Eleanor, my boys ate so much they didn't have room for your lovely pie."

Well I remember what she looks like. They sent for me from that terrible place in Augusta when she had the operation after her secret baby died. I had to tell Philo I was having my insides photographed, and then I had to go have it done, so it wouldn't be a lie. He said, "My sisters never get sick," but he didn't mean to criticize. He was only wondering why bad things come to some but not to others, as if you could prevent all kinds of trouble if you only put your mind to it.

Strawberry pie again, Eleanor, how nice. I can hear them this very minute. I help Philo up on the dock and then I have to get the hamper. Wish I could drop the filthy thing

---

Kit Reed is the author of twenty books, among them The Better Part, The Ballad of T. Rantula, Magic Time, *and* Catholic Girls. *She lives in Middletown, Connecticut, and teaches fiction writing at Wesleyan.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into the water and jump in after it. *Oh look everybody, it's Eleanor, and she's brought the strawberry pie.*

"Poor Philo, if he hadn't married Eleanor."

They think I don't hear them. They think it's my fault Philo is so feeble. They think he should have married somebody big and strong, that knew how to take care of things—as if failure crippled, not age or disease. Two of Marge's boys help him onto the dock and I know that for the day at least he will be taken care of. Then I bend down for the hamper and my dress rides up in the back so they can all see clear up to where my stockings roll. When I pop up with the basket one of those big boys will be gawking; I see Edna's Milt looking snide as I hand up the pies.

Forty-two years of crying on the Fourth of July. That's six weeks of crying on that day alone, never mind the other times when I'm safe at home. I have to go off somewhere so they won't see I'm down; otherwise his sisters will be all over me, all fleshy farmers' hands and watery brown eyes.

Why Eleanor, what's the matter?

What on earth's the matter, Eleanor?

I know they mean well but there are so many of them with those same eyes, and after all these years I am still scared of them. I have to walk softly among them so they won't smell the fear on me and strike.

When I met Philo we were a thousand miles from here and I thought he was what I thought he was. How was I supposed to know he was only the tip of something larger, that big family with their big frames and the big hearts that he keeps throwing up to me. How could I know I was going to shrivel in their presence, when I was supposed to measure up? Only little Benjy came down for the wedding; the rest of them were planning a great big wedding party at the camp when Philo brought me home.

They were already on the island when we got there. The Goodmans are scattered over three counties and they might even seem ordinary when taken separately, but when they come together on that island they are enormous, like a bunch of bones that have snapped in place to make a dinosaur. They all come with hampers and casseroles and baskets of fruit and early vegetables and homemade pickles and preserves; they come loaded down with food nobody could ever finish eating, not even the whole state of Maine, because overflow has always been part of it, which is one of the reasons I always cry. I don't have much of anything to spare.

We sat down at trestle tables in the cabin Philo and his father and brothers made, everybody laughing and elbowing on the long benches, muttering over their food. They had gangs of kids pushing each other off benches at the children's table and smearing wedding cake. I could see the Goodmans were caught up in their own plenty and at the same time they were watching, judging me; the next thing I knew tears were running down my nose into the macaroni salad and I ran away. Philo flew up and followed me down to the dock; he was scared to death something was wrong. Then when I tried to tell him he pulled back and said, "Is *that* all?"

I said, "I can't."

He put his arms around me. "It's only my family."

And didn't I bellow then; "I *know*."

He was all There there. "You'll feel better about it next year. Next year you'll have something to bring."

He meant the pies of course, somebody at the top of the world had decided what I was going to bring.

And I sobbed harder because I will always hate making pies, but all those strong women will go to the grave without knowing it. And even after he hugged me and went "Sh sh, there there," I kept on crying because I already knew without knowing that no matter what I brought, it would never be enough because I am only the one person and together the Goodmans are that huge living thing.

When Evelyn was born I thought: Maybe this will make the difference. Philo took care of her for two days that summer while I dragged myself around the kitchen making those hateful pies, I'll never forget all the paper plates with the leftovers still on them, going into the trash. Evvie was only four weeks old and I wasn't quite myself; Philo's brothers Ralph and Benjy had to help me out of the boat and then his big sister Marge looked into the blanket and I could just see what she was thinking when she said, "Oh look everybody, it's a girl." Then she put the blanket back because Goodman women only ever had boys, and I cried for embarrassment, for my baby Evelyn. They all brought presents, pink this and ruffled that. They said, "It's so nice to buy something pretty for a change," but I knew what they meant. Philo's Pop was still alive and he held Evvie in his two hands, weighing her against all those Goodman boys; she was next to nothing in his hands. Philo, he didn't see it; he idolized Evvie, he always did, which is why when she got to high school and went so bad, he took it so hard. He was tickled and dizzy that summer, rattling around the camp like one of them, but I could see their eyes when they thought I wasn't looking, and I knew.

One year Benjy's wife Lane took me aside. She'd been in the family for a while by then; all those Goodmans took right to her, good big girl, gave them lots of little boys. I remember my sweet boy Randolph was hiding up in the woods where they all chased them, them savage cousins with their big shoulders and their tufted heads; he just hid and he wouldn't come down until night when all the other boats had left. My Evelyn was leading the pack that badgered him, filthy and loud as any of the boys, so it wasn't our poor Randolph I was crying for but Evvie, because she thought she was just as good as all the rest of them, the Goodmans with their shaggy heads and their big klunky feet.

At the end Benjy's wife came up to me, her voice was low and kind of There there, "These picnics are hard. Everybody feels the strain."

I looked at her and I thought: Potato salad, practically foolproof; they all made a big fuss over it even though she and Benjy hadn't been married half as long as Philo and me. "Your salad was real good this year."

"Don't cry Eleanor." She was looking up into the dark pines, where Randolph had disappeared to, and I thought I heard her muttering, "I hate it," so we almost talked, but then one of the big boys jumped Evvie and by the time I pulled her out of the fight and got back to her, Benjy's wife was saying, "I'm always scared to death it will turn out to be mushy," and her boys were bouncing on her, she was surrounded by big strong sons, so I couldn't be sure what she'd really tried to say.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The next year we went to my family for the Fourth of July. I saw to it; I made Philo explain to his folks, he was sweet about it but the kids had fits when they found out; they whined the entire way. When we got there the house seemed too small and there wasn't enough food because my mother wasn't used to fixing for armies and there weren't any cousins so the children fussed the whole time. In the middle of it we had to call the camp and Philo and the kids had to talk to all the Goodman aunts and uncles and cousins while my mother and I sat at the empty table and tapped our fingers because we'd worked so hard and it had gone so fast and there was nothing to do but sit and listen to them phoning and look out the window at the rain.

Philo was sweet about it, he said we could go there every Fourth as far as he was concerned, but I could see his whole body twitching; it was like watching the shad fighting their way upriver to spawn; when his family gets together he has to be part of it, no matter who cries or what goes wrong they all have to come together at certain times.

We had wedding parties at the camp, first Marge's oldest, then Edna's, then Ralph's; Evvie was big enough to flirt with all the groomsmen and later on I guess she went up in the woods with more than one; I was ready to let it go by because I didn't want to know for sure, but the others wouldn't just let us *be*, they were watching like vultures on a branch, and they found out at the party we had when it was Ralph Junior's turn and we gave him and the girl a big to-do at the camp, Goodmans always say Waste Not Want Not so naturally we had it on the Fourth.

I brought the pies that year, there are two dozen different ways a person can spoil them, but that time they came out fine, wouldn't you know we had cake too, Marge made it along with the beans even though I said she didn't need to, we had plenty of pies. It was a big sheet cake with a bride and groom on top and Ralph Junior Plus Betsy in beautiful green script with so much butter cream frosting on top and so many yellow-and-green butter cream rosebuds that nobody had much room for my pies.

Even so the first part of the day was sweet; Philo's parents were gone by that time but one of the nephews and his wife Teeny had brought a brand new baby, and that poor mother spent the afternoon running back and forth with baby bottles and heated jars of baby food while all the aunts snuggled the thing with big smiles on their big faces and the young people just drifted off, some of them this way and some that. We all said all the usual things, how big all the kids had gotten, how well everybody looked, it was a little like the opening responses that we go through on Sundays at church, a pleasure and a comfort when everything else is sliding and it's hard to tell who's who and what's what. When suppertime came and the light changed Marge and Edna and Benjy's wife and I all fussed over the trestle tables, setting places and laying out serving dishes; I remember thinking we were murmuring together like real kinfolks, even though I probably knew the big boys were up there in the woods torturing my poor Randolph; he used to come back to camp panting and bruised or bleeding from unexpected scratches: It's nothing, Ma, but pretty soon he'd skulk into some corner and hide behind a book until the day was over and we could get in the boat and go. My Evvie was off God knows where with the young people — Ralph's son the bridegroom and his friends, that girl he was marrying tried to pretend she was busy with Teeny's baby but I knew. When Evvie came back she looked drunk but the young men were showing off and making fools of themselves over her so I didn't say anything about her blouse popping and her bra straps slipping; I thought: For once we are all in the middle of things.

Then dinner came, music and noise and firelight on the rafters; we ate inside because it was cold on the Fourth that year. One of the boys said something to Big Ralph and he whispered to Philo. Then I saw Philo get up from the table, shaking, and I can't tell you now if it was anger or if God had struck in that instant and this was my first warning: maybe I was supposed to be expecting the stroke he had in September, and the palsy that followed the stroke. He got up before we even had the cake, trembling Philo in the wake of his oldest brother, stumbling toward the woods. They brought her back down along with the young man, who was he, some friend of Ralph Junior's that his wife was sitting right there; I could hear Philo yelling and hitting and her shouting while we all sat and ate that wedding cake and pretended not to hear anything, and everybody got so full on cake that I had to take home all my pies, but I can tell you I waited until we got halfway back to the mainland and dropped them over the stern; Philo was so mad at her he was still shaking and I cannot begin to tell you what I was thinking when I said, into the sound of the motor churning, It serves you right.

They just pulled me out the doorway, pointing to Philo and shushing because they didn't want me to know, they were moist and sweet as big old girls with a party secret.

My Evvie was gone before the Fourth came around again. She used to send me postcards care of Marge, Philo's own sister, imagine, and I would slip off to see her whenever she was in Augusta, even Boston, I always got there but I always had to lie because nothing is that simple but I know Philo blames her for the stroke.

When the family gets together now somebody always gets me aside and asks, but off somewhere, so Philo won't know. I tell them she is working in a restaurant when it's a bar or worse, and that she is engaged when there are too many men; I told them it was pneumonia when whatever she had wasted her tubes so she can never have babies; they don't pry. I don't know why, but when we talk about Evvie, his sisters and his brothers' wives and I are almost close, whispering because Philo says she's as good as dead to him, he doesn't even want to hear her name. They always ask and I really want to tell because for once I can say my girl's name out loud and that brings her into the room with us, for a minute at least. I will say this for them, they have none of them ever blamed me for Evelyn, although I know they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blame me for a lot of other things.

They probably think it's my fault Randolph turned out the way he did, something about the way I am that made him choose what he chose; between Evvie and Randolph my Philo is never going to have any grandchildren and in that family this is a big thing. They probably think it's my fault poor Philo is failing so; he shakes so bad he can't go to his job at the post office, they've cut him off and pensioned him out so that part of his life is over, like so many things. He sits around home all the time now, in front of the TV; sometimes he shakes in my arms at night and I know what he's thinking: What did I do that brought this down on us; what was my big mistake? Then I start shaking too and gnaw the insides of my mouth to keep from telling him: You never should have married me, with my small bones and my skinny face, I can't even make a proper strawberry pie. Sometimes at night he bites my shoulder to keep from crying and he says, Eleanor, take care of me. Even if I can't do anything else, Philo Goodman, I'll always take care of you.

The pies didn't set this year either, but something new came along with us in the boat, nothing I could see but I knew it was there, round and real as an egg. It was not exactly hope but more of an expectation, because Evvie called this morning while Philo was in the bathtub, she said not to ask how but sooner or later today I was going to see her, we would hug and say hello before tonight. So I carried that in the boat with us like an extra passenger, I was thinking she might walk in on the hot dog roast at noon, married to some nice farmer and happy at last, or else she'd come with a pot of beans in time for the big supper, she'd have her handsome husband with her and in spite of what the doctors said she'd have a baby in her arms.

Oh Eleanor. They were all on the docks, waiting. I thought I could read something new in their faces but all they said was, "Look everybody, it's Eleanor. She's brought her strawberry pies."

I don't know why but this time I bent down for the basket and I came up fighting, saying, "They're not *my* pies, Marge, they're *your* strawberry pies. If it wasn't for your family, I would never make another strawberry pie."

She pulled back with a look but she didn't say anything, she just handed the basket to one of her big boys, I guess it's grandsons by this time, and then Philo's big sister stepped over close and murmured, "Did you get a phone call?" But I was holding my secret call from Evelyn close to my heart; I would show them all, and in the next second so fast that I couldn't tell if the two things were linked she said, "Benjy's in the hospital. He won't be coming out."

"That's terrible."

But Philo came up complaining, where was Ben when he was needed on the Fourth, tests are one thing, but this is family, Benjy never cared for us he just . . . she threw me a look: Shall I tell him? I shrugged: he doesn't want to understand. He just kept on, so bent on it that she gave me another look: he would wait a long time before she'd be the one to tell him; he could rot in hell. And in that funny minute it crossed my mind that maybe it wasn't the family that expected so much from us at these gatherings, but only Philo, and at the same time I heard Marge's voice like a rosebud trailing down my arm: "You always did try too hard."

I was afraid I was going to cry or flare up because she'd found me out but the rest of them were waiting, all those stout Goodmans waiting to bow their heads over the food; I had to pull myself together for Benjy's wife Lane if for no other reason so I told that poor girl the only thing I could think of: "Your potato salad looks just wonderful."

Lane hugged me and we both managed to keep from crying. "So do your pies."

It was different at dinner, not just because Benjy was sick and I was watching the door every living minute, wondering was Evvie going to walk in or would she beckon me outside? Everybody was restless; the grandchildren were fighting and spilling milk, and Marge and Edna couldn't seem to keep still; they kept running over to the window, and I could tell they were distracted—something had gone wrong with the beans. Even Ralph's good old wife, who is fat and getting stiff, got up and went out in the middle of dinner: "I just can't get enough of the moon." She looked over her shoulder like a girl. Then she called Marge out to look at it and Marge came back in while we were clearing the table for dessert, she said, "Eleanor, you've got to come out and look at this moon."

"My pies!"

"The moon, Eleanor."

This year my pies were perfect, *perfect*, and she wanted me to . . . How could I go outside? But Edna had me by the other hand and they were tugging me along, "Come on, it's important," big old Goodman women nudging me along like woolly mammoths bumping or two kindly old mother bears when all the time I was jangling like a wire and my voice kept on going up, I couldn't help it, "You just don't want to have to eat my pies."

I don't know what I wanted: for them to agree or for them to fight, us women to have it all out in the open, whatever it is: why I come here year after year and in all these mortal years of human sufferings at picnic after picnic, their beans, our children, my poor pies, I'm still not one of them, I could hardly stand it but here they were, pulling me along. They just pulled me out the doorway, pointing to Philo and shushing because they didn't want me to know, they were moist and sweet as big old girls with a party secret. They took me down on the dock and pointed across to the water to this spot in the dark that was a flashlight on the landing blinking: off and on, off and on.

Marge said, "It's Evelyn."

Everything in me fell out. "Oh Marge."

"Come on," she said. "We can't let Philo know."

So now I am in the boat again but we're going in together, me and Philo's two sisters and his brothers' wives who have arranged this and kept it a secret from Philo because they know what he is like and they know what he would do, my poor grudging Philo who's never forgiven a hurt and never will. It's the Fourth of July again and of course I am crying but this time it's at our meeting, my girl Evvie's and mine, and after my Evelyn gets back in her car and goes away the rest of us will get in the boat together and go on back out to the island, and if I cry again it will be because we were always together, these women and me, only I didn't know.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Way We Live

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"Self, self, has half filled Hell."
—Scottish Proverb

The Rise of Selfishness in America
by James Lincoln Collier
New York: Oxford University Press;
320 pp., $24.95

◆

James Lincoln Collier is the descendant of well-to-do New Englanders, mill-owners "who lived in a grand house on a hill, overlooking a row of . . . the cottages of the workers [they] . . . employed." Nevertheless, his new book—which could as well be called *The Rise of the Techno-Industrial Megastate in America*—is in many respects a restatement, from a different perspective, of the case against modern, nontraditional society made by a group of disaffected Southern agrarians back in 1930: a profoundly reactionary book with a liberal coda added on. Its thesis is nothing less than the basic and complete unworkability, in human terms, of the mass industrial society that has engorged America since Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox.

The Puritanism of 17th-century America began to dissipate almost at once, Mr. Collier tells us, and by the beginning of the 18th century it was scarcely more than a memory. In the Enlightenment, as in the first decades of the 19th century, standards of sexual morality were lax, extramarital and premarital sex having become common; dancing and drinking were favorite pastimes; and church attendance was low. Then in the third decade of the 1800's, "Victorianism" asserted itself in reaction to what Collier calls the "18th-Century Debauch" by its insistence upon the ideals of gentility and of the family, by the temperance and

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

antismoking crusade, by the attempt to regulate sexual activity and to enforce "morality" in the arts, and by the rediscovery of religious fervor. Victorianism, while it became a fetish of the rising middle class, was by no means restricted to it but was adopted as well by "the farmers and artisans who still, through most of the 19th century, made up the largest chunk of American society." Victorianism, in its essence, was a program of self-control, of self-discipline.

Much has been said of the Victorians as hypocrites who invented and imposed a system of social morality that exactly suited their interests, in particular their material ones. Collier allows some truth in this view, but contends that, "however large the gap between the Victorian ideal and Victorian behavior, these people, as a society, set for themselves goals of social concern, charity, self-control, a decent regard for the welfare of others, a willingness to protect the weak. They may have failed, but at least they were trying." The Victorian Era lasted approximately from 1830 until 1910. Mr. Collier's question is: "How in the course of about the sixty years from 1910 to 1970 did a morality that seemed fixed and permanent get stood on its head? . . . how did the United States turn from a social code in which self-restraint was a cardinal virtue to one in which self-gratification is a central idea, indeed ideal?" For James Collier, the answers are industry, technology, immigration, and the "giant industrial cities" to which these gave rise, turning the United States "topsy-turvy" in the process.

Around 1830, industrialization began to divide urban Americans into two distinct classes, working and nonworking, or what we today call blue- and white-collar. By 1850 or so, the new middle class was perhaps 50 percent Old Stock American and 50 percent immigrant. It was the working-class immigrants, however, who created the sea change in American society, especially those coming from non-Anglo-Saxon countries after the Civil War. Few among these huddled masses were sympathetic to Victorianism: "less optimistic and more hedonistic" than the native Americans, they

Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at Chronicles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wished to live "expressively" and their idea of "success" differed sharply from that of the prevailing culture. They enjoyed drinking, dancing, and romancing, and their standards in regard to these activities were considerably looser than those of the Victorians above them. They were uninterested, moreover, in such niceties as punctuality and cleanliness.

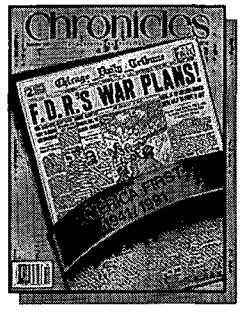
For the first time in American—probably in world—history, the cities were overrun with young people (roughly half of them refugees from the American hinterland) who had neither family nor neighborhood nor community in the traditional sense, and therefore no perceived responsibility to any but themselves; cut away from the past and with no feeling for an improbable future, they rapidly grew accustomed to living in and for the present. Industrial work, unlike farm work, creates a radical distinction between work and play, and the institutionalization of vice (the tenderloin, the dance hall, the saloon) proceeded apace. The Victorians, in alarm, reacted by the temperance movement, "purity reform," and that fasces of social and political reform known as "Progressivism," attempting to control through law what they could not influence by example. But by 1912 the game was up, and following World War I the middle class, in Collier's phrase, "was simply seduced" by essentially working-class and foreign moral codes that seemed more relevant than Victorianism to a new generation of Americans. "It was inevitable," Collier writes, "that the city became the battleground where the war against Victorianism was fought: for in the end, the city itself was the enemy. And the victor was the self."

The 20th century is indeed the "Age of Entertainment" even more than it is the age of mass murder, and Mr. Collier is very good at showing how entertainment for the masses has been both a cause and a result of the creation of an American proletariat, beginning with vaudeville that developed from the minstrel and variety shows after the Civil War and which, by such techniques as concentrated ownership and the control of theater chains, made straight the way for the movie industry in the next century. Never, as James Collier correctly states, in the history of the world have so many people spent so much time being entertained as in America from the 1920's on—a circumstance he claims to be directly responsible for the habit of detachment that has prevailed in this country for decades and that promises to create "a nation of loners" cut off from reality and from one another through their preoccupation with fantasy and simulacra. Mass entertainment too, in the form of both show business and sports, is the creature of the megalopolis, on which it is directly dependent for the infrastructure that delivers millions of warm bodies and paralyzed cerebra, on demand and on time, to movie palaces and sports coliseums across America. Even the popular music industry is a product of the giant industrial city where, in the last decades of the 19th century and the first ones of the 20th, immigrants and the sons of immigrants—none of whom had ever ventured across the Hudson River—fabricated the national preference for a kind of song never heard in America before (or anywhere else, for that matter): music that had no roots in American folk ballads and "expressive" lyrics that abandoned the notion of song as narrative and replaced it by the formula—standard since then—that is modern humanity's equivalent of a bull elk's bugle during the rut. (I had not known, by the way, that Irving Berlin was compelled by his weak musicianship to hire an assistant to help him harmonize his songs.) "For most," Mr. Collier remarks sourly, "the response to the catastrophes of the 1930's was to go to the movies."

James Collier argues that the cultural divide across the postwar (World War II) years must be located around 1973 rather than in the early 60's: "in the early 1970's there was a swing politically to the right, the ending of post-war prosperity, and a dramatic upward surge in selfishness which very quickly became so gross as to effect a qualitative change in the nature of American life." From here to the end of the book it is downhill all the way, even more for the author than for his unhappy country. To this point, we have been reading a work of history; now we find ourselves perusing a *New York Times Magazine* article. Collier, in his indignation at Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and the Me Decade, echoes John Kenneth Galbraith's complaint of the 60's that "we" are keeping too much wealth in

CHRONICLES GIFT OFFER

Give a one-year subscription to **Chronicles** for only $24 (you save $6 or 20% off the cover price). Just complete and mail the coupon below with your check or money order, and we'll promptly send each recipient a gift card in your name.



GIFT FOR _____ GIFT FOR _____

ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

MY NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

FOREIGN ORDERS ADD $6 PER SUBSCRIPTION • U.S. FUNDS ONLY • CHRONICLES SELLS FOR $2.50 A COPY.
SEND TO: CHRONICLES • P.O. BOX 800 • MT. MORRIS, IL 61054

XPD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the private sector and not putting enough into the public one. He calls for more money for schools, drug rehabilitation programs, and better police forces; less for ski weekends, pizza, and hunting weapons. He chastises government for failing to represent the interests of the community. Yet surely the burden of the preceding chapters is that America is no longer a community in any fair sense of the word. And if Americans are collectively a lot of dope and television addicts, alcoholics, fast-food gluttons, adulterers, pornographers, wife-betrayers, and child-abusers, why should the government spend the money and the effort to bail them out of the rewards of their own self-indulgence? (Incidentally, does Mr. Collier truly believe that it is primarily affluent people, rather than indigent ones, who are guilty of selfishness? With the exception of the flocks of mental patients released from their psycho wards in response to suits brought by civil-rights activists, the majority of the sainted "homeless" are simply misfits, drunks, and crackheads —what even in the Great Depression were known as "bums" and "hobos.")

The trouble is that James Lincoln Collier, like so many old-fashioned American liberals, is also a bit of a puritan. He deplores the fact that, "Today . . . alcohol is a norm in the lives of the majority" and credits the doughboys' furlough in France—"a culture in which wine was served with meals, even breakfast in some cases; where brothels were legal and taken for granted"—with having further eroded Victorian morality. Yet France in 1917 was a civilized country no less than the United States, and probably not more "selfish." Hence the question: is Collier's thesis regarding the rise of selfishness a variant of the old theory of American exceptionalism?

Is it the case, in other words, that wine-drinking, relaxed sexual mores, comparative laziness, and the temptations of urban life were intrinsically fatal to American society, but not to European ones? Is it a fact that tippling and fornication were controllable in the Calabria of the 19th century but not in the New York or Chicago of that time? One might argue that if Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards had drunk less wine and made less love, then France, Italy, and Spain might have shared in that transatlantic decency and sobriety that was Anglo-American Victorianism. On the other hand, sobriety and decency breed efficiency, which makes possible the great economic machine that creates the great cities that produce the spoiled, selfish, and detached loners of whom Mr. Collier complains.

The truth is that the selfishness that Collier deplores is not a peculiarly American problem but a necessary condition of the mass industrial state everywhere—in Europe, in Asia, in Latin America, even in Africa. Human society, it appears, is able to accommodate small laxities of behavior so long as a traditional framework continues to surround it: family, church, and community. Once that framework is removed, venialness and vice together with harmless enjoyment become dangerous compulsions, and pleasure itself an addiction. The modern way of living, it must be obvious, is not the human one. Why should we be shocked to find it producing something less than what we like to think of as human behavior? ◇

ASK MISS MORALS

This is the first in a series of columns addressing the moral dilemmas of life at the end of a millennium. Letters, which should be sent to Miss Morals c/o Chronicles, *will be kept in strictest confidence.*

I've been reading advice columnists all my life. In fact, they (along with the comics) are about the only things I read in the newspapers. Back in the 1950's, the advice being ladled out was the predictable, soft-edged sermonizing you'd hear from a junior pastor or a camp counselor: don't drink or smoke, don't talk back to your mother, and no matter what he tells you in the backseat at the drive-in, he will not respect you in the morning. It was as thin and unexciting as skim milk, but it was also safe and ultimately nutritious.

But all that has changed. Starting in the 60's, Ann and Abby began to swing: instead of chastity, they recommended sex with commitment; instead of marital fidelity, they dwelt on the need to escape from troubled marriages. You don't have to imagine what kind of people were willing to take this advice; you can see them every day in singles' bars, in divorce court, or on Phil or Oprah.

All this time I have been thinking: why can't you ever read some real advice—not the gooey stuff about safe sex or even the milk-and-water recommendations on what nice girls do and don't do. Why can't we read the kind of advice that was once inscribed in stone, emblazoned in scarlet letters, or branded onto faces. Something like "Thou shalt not commit adultery." A plain, simple no. Today we are more likely to read something like, "Don't tell your husband, because what he doesn't know won't hurt you."

Recently a divorced woman in her 40's wrote to Ann or Abby to confess that she had been seduced by "raging hormones" into sleeping with a friend's husband. She was crazy, she admitted, and—get this—she now believes he lied to her, when he told her he loved her. What was the answer? Something like, "you're a very wise lady who has her act together. Divorcées take warning!"

How's that again? This is what you say to a woman whose greatest regret is that she failed to break up a friend's marriage? Miss Morals has a slightly different perspective on the problem.

Can this woman have really lived for 45 years without hearing that men are deceivers? Is she really the victim or a failed criminal? Even in an age of sexual liberation, we owe certain things to our friends. This lady would probably never dream of stealing her friend's teaspoons or borrowing her car without asking. What makes her think she's justified in borrowing, much less stealing, her husband? Chastity belts are passé, but this is the age of medical remedies for moral diseases. If she can't control her raging hormones, she might consider corrective surgery: have her knees pierced and bolted together.

You get the idea. Although Miss Morals does not intend to insult her correspondents, she is not afraid to be judgmental, and if no one writes in, she can always live off Ann-and-Abby's table scraps for years to come.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Getting Back to Nature

by Kenneth Craycraft

"Human rights are fictions—but fictions with highly specific properties."
—Alasdair MacIntyre

Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse
by Mary Ann Glendon
New York: Free Press;
218 pp., $22.95

◆

In 1960 John Courtney Murray, S.J., warned of the possibility that America was slipping into a new barbarism. In his best known work, *We Hold These Truths*, Father Murray said that barbarism "threatens when men cease to talk together according to reasonable laws."

> Argument ceases to be civil when it is dominated by passion and prejudice; when its vocabulary becomes solipsist, premised on the theory that my insight is mine alone and cannot be shared; . . . When things like this happen, men cannot be locked together in argument. Conversation becomes merely quarrelsome or querulous. Civility dies with the death of dialogue.

In short, said Murray, "Barbarism threatens when men cease to live together according to reason, embodied in law and custom."

Thirty years later, Mary Ann Glendon fears that Father Murray's concern may have become reality. She claims in this book that contemporary "rights talk" is both the cause and result of a political society that has become "merely quarrelsome and querulous." Glendon, a professor of law at Harvard University, argues persuasively that the hyper-individualistic idiom of rights language in America (unique, she thinks, among liberal democracies) has led us to the point where little authentic discourse takes place in American political culture.

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Or should one say "American *legal* culture," since a large part of the problem is our obsession with absolute demands for our "rights," which has led to a highly legalistic orientation. She cites the " 'legalization' of popular culture" as both "cause and consequence of our tendency to look to law as an expression and carrier of the few values that are widely shared in our society: liberty, equality, and the ideal of justice under law." By reducing political discourse to mere legalisms, we have forgotten how to have truly *political* conversations, rooted in traditional forms of authority such as family, church, and community.

Professor Glendon demonstrates that several significant problems follow from the legalistic temptation. First, by reducing political discourse to a discussion of mere legal protection of our rights, "legality . . . has become the touchstone for legitimacy" in social debates. Despite the vacuous rhetoric about not legislating morality ("A moment's reflection suffices to remind us of how much of American criminal law . . . [is] a repository of moral norms"), Americans have come to feel that legal permission is moral sanction. When traditional forms of legitimate moral guidance and proscription are done away with, only the legislative code remains to define what is legitimate, and thus "moral." "As social norms become weaker," Glendon asserts, "a kind of moral vacuum arises" and "law has a tendency to move into this vacuum." Our statutes and (more importantly) our great judicial opinions have caused Americans to "regard certain types of law as carrying a moral charge." Americans regard legality as the minimum moral requirement, with any stronger sanction being a matter of individual choice.

This phenomenon is not limited to positive legislation. Glendon argues that emphases and silences in legislation and case law also suggest moral legitimacy. "The silence of law can begin to speak," says Glendon. The silence she is most worried about is that of any language of "responsibility," or positive obligation to act in American law. Ours is a system built upon the "right to be let alone," and little else. Since Americans so persistently look to law as moral sanction, Glendon is convinced that an infusion of the language of duty into both law and judicial opinion would effectively improve the way we treat one another in the real world. Instead, our laws assume and encourage the "lone rights-bearer" unencumbered by any positive moral obligation, but with many positive legal

Kenneth Craycraft is finishing a Ph.D. in theology at Boston College and is a research associate for the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

claims and demands.

This brings us to the second problem of our simplistically legalistic culture: discussion of law in America is rarely about justice and almost always about claims, assertion, will, and power —in short, about rights. Where a theory of personal virtue is absent and some theoretical "right" is set in its place, only will and power can decide. Contemporary American law, then, is occupied not with principles of justice but with the distribution of power. Since American law, having no principle of justice beyond rights, cannot weigh the legitimacy of certain legal claims, it tries merely to balance one claim against another when the two conflict. Thus, says Glendon, "The new rhetoric about rights is less about human dignity and freedom than about insistent unending desires." When notions of freedom and human dignity are stripped of a context defined by traditional forms of authority, and when justice is uprooted from a narrative environment of virtue, only will remains. And Americans have taught themselves very well how to assert their will (meaning rights) through laws. Abortion is the perfect example: "In the United States, the abortion issue is typically framed as pitting two interests against each other in an all-or-nothing contest: the right to life of the fetus against the pregnant woman's right to privacy and self-determination."

So we live not in a truly political culture based on rational conversation but in a disparate group of atomistic individuals loudly asserting rights, placing in the process a great strain on our system of government. "Our stark, simple rights dialect puts a damper on the processes of public justification, communication, and deliberation" that are essential for the life of a democratic regime. Like Father Murray, Glendon worries that we cannot come to authentic *dis*agreement: "It has become increasingly difficult even to define critical questions, let alone debate and resolve them."

Glendon also demonstrates how the laws of other liberal democracies manage to avoid the atomism of American law. Rights in many western European laws and constitutions are often rooted in the context of responsibility to the political community. Though they are individualist, promoting the good of individuals and protecting their liberty, they place (and thus define) the individual and his rights within a context that mitigates and qualifies those rights so that they do not work against the good of the larger political community.

This is in contrast with American law (especially case law), which bases much of its reasoning on the fictitious pre-political individual. Supreme Court cases in particular have aggressively held that no social considerations are allowed in protecting (or inventing) rights of individuals. This is most starkly established in the recent cases that have caused such turmoil in American public life: *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, *Eisenstadt* v. *Baird*, *Roe* v. *Wade*, and *Doe* v. *Bolton*. Rights in these decisions, all involving "privacy," abide absolutely with the individual. The "right to be left alone" is the epitome of contemporary American legal protection.

Mary Ann Glendon is well-known for her assertion that law is the expression of a political community. The kinds of laws we enact and the way we enforce them are not arbitrary; rather, they represent the narrative of our lives together. This being so, it seems paradoxical when Glendon asserts that she does not think we really are as individualistic and selfish as our extreme preoccupation with rights makes us seem. Glendon cites the many voluntary civic and cultural institutions to suggest that we are not atomistic strangers to one another, that we do indeed see ourselves as social animals by the many free associations we form and join. Yet she worries that much modern case law presents "new and unfortunate meanings in a society whose rights talk is filled with uprooted law talk."

Perhaps Glendon is correct: we are formed by the law and, especially from Glendon's perspective, by the particular language of the law. But this material formulation can only take place because we have already accepted the formal idea that legal leniency is roughly equated with moral leniency. Legality *is* legitimacy; and legitimacy always ends up being about protecting a right, or inventing a new one. Consequently, nude dancing cases are not about morality, virtue, or even "values," but about someone's right to dance in the nude.

But there is a second paradox in *Rights Talk*. Glendon is persistent and convincing in her account of how this phenomenon has become a perverse form of political debate, but she makes it clear that she does not intend to reject rights, per se, as a principle of justice. Her book "is not an assault on specific rights or on the idea of rights in general," nor does she want to "abandon" but to renew "our strong rights tradition." But Glendon's book suggests that this may not be possible, and that the theory of "rights" itself must be seriously reconsidered.

Although Glendon correctly complains that political discourse is being reduced to legal claims, is not this situation inevitable to a rights-based (i.e., liberal) political philosophy? For instance, she worries that our "rights language" prohibits the facilitation of "public discussion of the right ordering of our lives together." But the whole point of liberalism is that *individual* rights replace *political* discourse, since in the 18th century we gave up on the idea of discovering political truth. Rather than attempt to describe the most humane of all possible political systems, we invented human rights and allowed individuals to pursue these on their own. The problem is not that radical rights language in America pre-

LIBERAL ARTS

BUT WHO'S THE QUEEN?

According to the *Colorado Dispatch* last October, two homosexuals were named to the homecoming court at Ohio State University. "This is wonderful," said student Marc Conte. "It shows that being gay shouldn't hold you back in anything you do." Conte and Mike Scarce, "president and vice president, respectively, of the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Alliance," were selected in "recognition by the university of their work on gay issues on campus," which Scarce considers "just as worthy as any kind of work." To protest the ROTC's policy against homosexuals, Scarce and Conte would not "participate in a tradition at the dance in which the homecoming court enters the ballroom by walking underneath the crossed sabers of ROTC cadets."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vents reasoned political debate; it is that individual rights themselves have replaced politics.

Glendon does not attempt to explain why some rights are legitimate and others are not. (Nor, it seems, is it possible to give such an explanation.) She argues that some debates, such as that regarding abortion, ought not to be argued in terms of rights alone. But this is simply because the legitimate conflict (legitimate, that is, in terms of a liberal rights theory) is so difficult to decide in terms of rights. Glendon argues further that an ethos of responsibility and obligation (as well as a society more welcoming of children) would make this particular battle easier to resolve. Of course she is correct; but if "rights" is still the category of justice at work, recourse to the "right to choose" will remain a trump. And when rights conflict, strength wins the day.

More fundamentally, Glendon seems to commit the common mistake of not seeing that liberalism is itself a political and moral tradition, one which rejects an ethic of responsibility in favor of one of claims and rights. Typically, Americans think liberalism is distinctive precisely because it does not describe the social narrative; or as Stanley Hauerwas puts it, "The story that liberalism teaches us is that we have no story, and as a result we fail to notice how deeply that story determines our lives." The story of liberalism is that we have no responsibility beyond protecting our own individual lives.

Glendon's book is evidence that the rights theory at work in America is the Hobbesian version that she explicitly questions. "The Right of Nature," says Thomas Hobbes, "is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently of doing any thing which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto. . . . It followeth, that in such a condition, every man has Right to every thing; even to one anothers body." Of course, since this renders us all at risk, we provisionally give up some aspects of this right and invent government to protect others.

But the doctrine remains, and Glendon offers substantial evidence that we are becoming an example of Hobbes' most famous sentence: "To this warre of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place." Hobbes is describing the "state of nature," toward which America is regressing. Professor Glendon sees this in what may be as strong an indictment of liberal rights as one can find:

> Neither the older political and civil rights, nor the newer economic and social rights, can be secure in the absence of social arrangements that induce those who are disadvantaged by the rights of others to accept the restrictions and interferences that such rights entail. When individual rights are permitted to undermine the communities that are the source of such practice, they thus destroy their own surest underpinning.

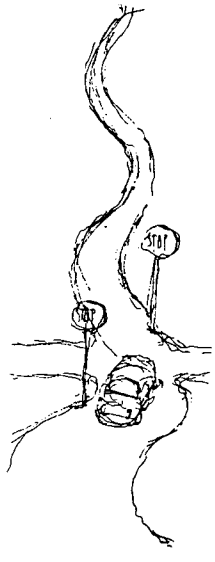
Glendon sees that "the evidence is mounting that we have been living for quite some time on inherited social capital, consuming our resources without replenishing them." But we must understand that this is according to the very genius of liberalism: those institutions that allow a liberal society to have some modicum of civility are inversely proportionate to the assertion and exercise of "rights."

These warnings and others in *Rights Talk* seem to indicate that Glendon herself may be implicitly giving up on the idea of rights, despite her efforts to preserve the theory that justifies them. She calls for a kind of "rights" that is intrinsically delimited or qualified by a particular context, and by a language of obverse duty and responsibility. If this is what she advocates, she is talking not about human but about civic or legal rights.

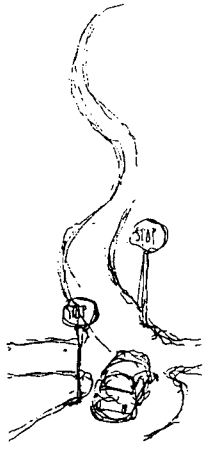
Glendon seems also to point back to a pre-liberal understanding of natural right, or natural justice. This theory holds not that individuals are born with rights, but that there is a naturally right, or naturally just, way to organize political society. She attempts not to defend these natural rights but to modify our understanding of ourselves and the law, and herein may be the real value of the book: it is an earnest, careful, and intelligent attempt to work within a theory of natural rights that demonstrates precisely why such a doctrine does not work. Glendon hints at something other than the current rights paradigm, at a much more promising way of arranging political society. Regrettably, such "rights talk" will not soon be purged from American political discourse.

LIBERAL ARTS

CASUALTIES OF SCALE



In an effort to decrease American dependence on foreign oil, Senator Richard Bryan of Nevada has introduced a bill that would require automobile manufacturers to raise the minimum miles per gallon to 34 by 1996 and to 40 by 2001. *Executive Alert* of the National Center for Policy Analysis reported last fall that "the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program is already responsible for 2,200 to 3,900 additional traffic deaths per model-year fleet because it has forced a decrease in vehicle weight, putting smaller, less safe cars on the road." It predicts that the new regulations would result in doubling the number of highway fatalities involving down-sized, fuel-efficient cars.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Forgotten Document

by Clyde Wilson

The Confederate Constitution of 1861: An Inquiry into American Constitutionalism
by Marshall L. DeRosa
Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press; 182 pp., $32.50

◆

A few months after the close of the American Civil War there was a brief but intense and interesting correspondence between Lord Acton, the European historian of liberty, and General R.E. Lee, hero of the defeated Confederacy, on the issues of the war. In the course of this correspondence Acton commented that Appomattox had been a greater defeat for the cause of constitutional liberty over despotism than Waterloo had been a victory. It is an arresting statement that ought to have received more attention from lovers of liberty and students of constitutionalism than it has.

DeRosa's study of the Confederate Constitution provides one way to approach the unexamined question raised by Acton. The book is a good deal more than its title suggests; its subtitle should be taken seriously. The author has, correctly, viewed the Confederate Constitution neither as anomalous nor insignificant, but rather as an illuminating part of American constitutional history. This is in itself a feat of intellectual courage, because nothing is harder than to discuss the issues of the American war rationally and fairly. Invariably there is the attempt to close off debate and understanding by the shout of "Slavery!" Nothing is easier for a scholar than to succumb to this pressure. Yet nothing is a surer sign of either ignorance or dishonesty. Such was the flaw of the otherwise excellent public television series on the war. Professor DeRosa has avoided this common fallacy and treated the constitutional issues of the war—and in its most essential aspect it was a constitutional dispute—seriously.

The Confederate framers took the high ground. They intended to found a lasting federal republic, and their deliberations were carried out on a serious intellectual plane. This is in itself remarkable when we consider that they were at the time under the greatest military threat that any large group of Americans has ever suffered—that is, under prospect of intense invasion by superior military forces from every direction—and that their more rabid opponents have managed to hand down as a historical "fact" the partisan charge that the Confederacy represented nothing but the attempt to found a slavocracy.

At stake was possession of the Fathers. Southerners always said and believed—throughout the antebellum conflicts, the war, and after—that their only goal was to preserve the American Constitution as it had been handed down, that theirs was an eminently conservative effort. Yet victors write the history, and the North was able to co-opt the Founders, portraying the Confederacy as a wicked rebellion against American principles. So the Northern cause got the credit for conserving, but also, very curiously, the credit and élan for being revolutionary, of having proclaimed new and wonderful principles. It perhaps explains the magical power of Lincoln to say that he managed by rhetoric and victory to combine the prestige both of preservation and revolution.

The Confederate Constitution, as has been often observed, embodied the Constitution of the United States, with minor adjustments. It is these adjustments that form the subject of Professor DeRosa's analysis and that are useful in understanding the U.S. Constitution. For the changes represented a heritage of very seriously considered reactions to the experience of practice with the Constitution of 1787. Therefore, they are of interest in American constitutional history and, as the author suggests, of pertinence to some of the dilemmas of today. Put another way, the few but significant innovations in the Confederate Constitution represent corrections of portions of the U.S. Constitution that had not worked to intent. In terms of political philosophy, the innovations embody the amendments made by Calhoun, the greatest American political thinker of the 19th century, to the commentary of "Publius" in *The Federalist*, which, after all, had been written before the Constitution was ratified, much less put into effect.

The Constitution of the Confederacy did not establish slavery. It left the matter to the states, just as did the Constitution of the United States, and it contained a stronger prohibition against the African slave trade than did the old Constitution. Its innovations related to other matters. Broadly speaking, they were of two types: those that spelled out the federal nature of the system to be established; and those that made adjustments to the functioning of the federal government, particularly the Presidency, in certain respects. In the first instance, the Confederate Constitution merely made explicit what had been intended by the Tenth Amendment, so explicit that agenda-oriented centralists could not evade it. It also put certain small but significant limits on the power of taxation and expenditure; that is, it expressed a real bias in favor of the free market and limited government, to correct the sectional and class favoritism that had been carried out by congressional majorities under the old government. This should be of interest to all real friends of free markets and limited government.

Most interesting were the changes in the federal executive and judiciary. The Confederate Constitution clearly intended to make the President the high and honorable Chief Magistrate that had been intended by the U.S. Constitution, rather than the party leader that he had devolved into. The President was to serve one six-year term, at one stroke abolishing the re-election question and the second-term impasse. He had a line-item veto in appropriations, meaning a check against irrelevant riders in congressional bills, which under the American system had already developed into a tremendous abuse. There were limits

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the degree to which the Congress could exceed the President's spending recommendations, and Cabinet Secretaries had seats on the floors of Congress, to enhance the process of deliberation beyond the exchange of formal messages, with the intent of increasing economy and accountability in the public business.

So far as the judiciary was concerned, the Confederate Constitution reflected the pure Jeffersonian principles of the early Republic. The right of judicial review was concurrent—shared by the state and federal courts. For the most basic principle was that the people ruled—that government rested upon the consent of the governed, the people, and that this did not mean simply whatever temporary majority happened to get control of the Supreme Court or Congress or presidency. It meant rather the consent of the people acting through all branches of their state and federal governments. At bottom were, as Jefferson had said, two different ideas of government: a national authority with power to coerce obedience to the governing elite (Hamilton); or a system of dispersed power that trusted the rule of the people through diverse institutions of power and consent (Jefferson). The Confederate Constitution represented the second alternative, and therefore, the author writes, "there is much to be learned from the theories that gave life and death to this American constitution."

DeRosa does not focus simply upon the Civil War, but provides deep background. In every question he gives us an original and illuminating discussion of basic ideas with the agreements, disagreements, and ambiguities at the time of the Founding; follows these ideas through the antebellum conflicts; and shows how the conflicts issued in particular features of the Confederate Constitution. This is a work of interest to all serious students of American constitutional history and political philosophy.

More impressive even than the content of DeRosa's book is the intellectual tone and approach, the spirit. He works in the same spirit as did the Founding Fathers and the Confederate framers. He regards the Constitution as an object of reverence and rationality. This is the true Jeffersonian spirit, which animated Calhoun, who once observed: "Constitutions are human contrivances, and what man does and his reasons for it, surely ought not to be beyond his capacity fully to comprehend." This is the proper spirit to approach the Constitution, as an instrument of self-government to be rationally preserved and employed by free men.

Clyde Wilson is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina and editor of The Papers of John C. Calhoun.

A World Safe for Democratists

by C. Winsor Wheeler

Who Owns the Children?
by Blair Adams
Waco, Texas: Truth Forum;
692 pp., $26.95

◆

From one point of view, *Who Owns the Children?* is a manifesto of educational freedom, an exhaustively researched broadside aimed at the pseudo-academic pretensions of our federal and state governments. Starting from the premise that all instruction is by its very nature religious, since it necessarily springs from certain assumptions about man and the universe, the author proceeds painstakingly to indict the whole concept of compulsory education as a frontal attack on the First Amendment to our Constitution. Historically, to be sure, mandatory school attendance has not been seen as such, partly because it was pushed into place by Protestants foolishly squabbling with Catholics over educational turf. Nevertheless, under the influence of the followers of John Dewey (who said, "If we have ground to be religious about anything, we may take education [itself] religiously"), the public education system has become one of the most militant destroyers of traditional faith this country has ever seen.

It is no accident that the last twenty-five years have seen a growing decline in the intellects of American children. Replacement of the three R's with touchy-feely mind games has robbed a whole generation of both knowledge and any moral base from which to apply their tediously acquired ignorance. Some parents, perceiving the foolishness of this course, began to form private church schools or to educate their children at home in the early 1970's. In a number of cases, these people were hauled into court and charged with "neglect," despite the fact that the removal of their children from the public sties had demonstrably improved the youngsters' brains and hearts. Several parents served jail terms for this heinous disregard of state authority, and at least four families were actually ripped apart by the slavering social services in their concern for the "best interests of the children."

How a system that willfully undermines and disparages the traditional family through its politically correct textbooks can claim to know anything of the best interests of children is one of the more poignant modern mysteries. But Blair Adams, not content to examine only one facet of this gem of hypocrisy, proceeds to put the acid to many of its other gleaming surfaces. Among these are developments apparently unrelated to education: compulsory immunization, mandatory seat belt laws, attempts to prevent or severely restrict home births, and the explosive growth of a bureaucratic machinery for dealing with "child abuse." Underneath the veneer of legislative rhetoric, however, the common element in all these matters is the state's effort to assert its authority over, and indeed even *within*, the nuclear family.

In many of our supposedly free states, the mere allegation of "child abuse" is now sufficient completely to suspend the constitutional rights of any parent unlucky enough to be so charged. An anonymous phone call is often all it takes to set social services in motion, and in many scenarios the accused is never allowed to face the accuser. The state's inquisition of experts takes over, at times extracting "evidence" from confused children via cruel brainwashing techniques and dragging families through the dungeons of a psychological hell, regardless whether they are really guilty, merely misunderstood, or entirely innocent.

The State, with its abstract

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> love — so out of touch with real love that it even defines the "right to privacy" as the license to insert a suction tube . . . into the mother's womb to kill a baby, now claims only it can provide the covering for this vulnerable child. At the same time, the State offers no protection and support to the family's claim to privacy against the social suction tubes . . . of the . . . department of Human Services. . . . Instead of . . . protection from [false accusations of child abuse], the State encourages, through promised anonymity and immunity, . . . devastating blows to the family's sheltered womb of personal and social integrity.

Few people, I daresay, would detect much moral difference between the perpetrators of such "cleansings and healings" and the perhaps more nobly motivated witch-hunters of the past. The ostensible intent to "help" is still there, but now the inexorable coercion of this philanthropy is applied by busybodies who believe ultimately not in eternal salvation, but in temporal "health" and "safety." As the old Inquisition tried to save people forever spiritually by forcing them to think and to speak in accordance with Catholic orthodoxy, so modern "health professionals" of every stripe attempt to exact conformity to their state-licensed authority in every sphere of bodily and psychological life. The evil of both lies in their denial of the individual's personal responsibility before God; and thus, in the name of eliminating all risks, they eliminate both the freedom and the humanity of those they purport to save.

The Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution, that beleaguered guardian of our individual liberties, grew out of the assumption that free men would always understand and embrace their personal responsibilities. The amendments were written by Europeans of Christian background who well knew the sinful tendency of majorities to oppress the consciences and persons of dissenters, and it is no accident that the primal liberty of conscience guaranteed by the First Amendment is immediately bolstered by the implied right of self-defense guaranteed in the Second Amendment. The one thing our Founding Fathers feared more than anything was an all-powerful state operating under the mystical majoritarian authority of "the people." Ironically, however, the Calvinist belief in general human depravity, which led the Founders to limit the powers of government, has since degenerated into a pseudo-Calvinist assumption of general human incompetence, leading inexorably (unless we repent) to the unlimited social and moral surveillance of Big Brother.

As the traditional nesting grounds of personal responsibility, the Church and the family have been bulwarks against the encroachment of state authority throughout this nation's history. But now, with the Church increasingly betrayed from within by the acceptance of humanist doctrines and with the family emasculated to a degree unprecedented in any age, little — if anything — remains to protect an individual from the commodious jaws of social planning monopolists intent on making the world very safe for themselves, and very sterile for their subjects.

C. Winsor Wheeler is a poet, freelance writer, and book reviewer for The Duke Review.

Up From the Ashes

by Gertrude M. White

Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life
by Robert Bernard Martin
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons; 448 pp., $29.95

◆

He was unknown and disregarded during the whole of his short life and for years thereafter. But fortune relented. Gerard Manley Hopkins, dead for 30 years, was provided with an editor who had known, admired, and loved him and who had preserved the body of his work until he felt the time was ripe. Once known, his difficult poems found their own way. Good critics considered him the greatest of the great Victorian poets. Now his belated good fortune continues: he has found the biographer for whom any poet might wish: informed, sympathetic, perceptive, judicious. And all readers of Hopkins must hereafter feel themselves in debt to Robert Bernard Martin, professor emeritus of English at both Princeton University and the University of Hawaii.

Gerard Manley Hopkins' life was short, obscure, and dogged by failure in his chosen vocation. His superiors in the Society of Jesus did their best to find a post where his manifest talents of mind and character might serve their order and bring Hopkins himself satisfaction and peace of mind. They failed. He suffered throughout his life from depressions so deep as to threaten his mental balance and, indeed, seems to have been happy at the end to accept death. The craft to which he applied himself with so many misgivings but with such devotion amid the manifold and trying exigencies of his life brought him neither understanding nor appreciation nor reputation. Only a handful of close friends even knew he wrote poetry. He habitually referred to himself, in letters and in verse, as "Time's eunuch," and his sense of sterility seemed the final cruel judgment on his life, his hopes, and his unvalued works.

Behold now how true is the ancient myth of the phoenix! A century ago Hopkins died of typhoid contracted in a filth-ridden Dublin. He was laid to rest among his fellow Jesuits in the Glasnevin cemetery, and a Latin inscription, one among some two hundred carved on a granite crucifix, is his only memorial. Yet from this earth, this grave, this dust, the poetry he wrote so painfully during his short, unhappy life has risen to speak like a trumpet to the modern ear, or like the golden echo of his own title. As the most powerful poet in an era of great poets, Hopkins left the record of his love, his suffering, and his faith in verse which, like the world of "God's Grandeur," is charged with energy and sustained by his passionate affirmation of the glory of creation.

Robert Bernard Martin's biography gives a fully detailed picture of the circumstances and the social and intellectual background of Hopkins' life: of his family, particularly his mother and father, with whom the poet had all his life a close, complex, and somewhat difficult relationship; of his education at school and at Balliol College, Oxford; of his conversion to Roman Catholicism at the age of 22, in the teeth of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family, society, and friends and under the influence of the great John Henry Newman; of his even more extreme decision to join the Society of Jesus, in which eventually, after a long period of study and probation, he was ordained and in which he served all his life; and of those various posts where this dedicated priest preached and taught. In the course of his account, Professor Martin paints vivid pictures of Hopkins' relationships with his many friends: friends as diverse as Walter Pater and Benjamin Jowett, Coventry Patmore, Robert Bridges — perhaps his closest friend, himself later Poet Laureate, to whom all readers of Hopkins owe their knowledge of his poetry — Canon Dixon, and the young Digby Dolben, dead at 19, whom Hopkins loved so deeply and whose early death was a lifelong grief to him. Professor Martin is clear and specific about Hopkins' homoeroticism, which shaped his life and colored his verse and — far more valuable for an appreciation of that verse — shows how the poet's repressed but powerful sexuality influenced and controlled the vocabulary, the imagery, and the pulsing emotion of his poems.

There are not many biographies that so illuminate the achievement as well as the life and character of their subjects. In Professor Martin's book we see working harmoniously together the biographer, the stylist, the literary critic. For of what use is the most diligent and dedicated research, of what good is the keenest penetration into psyche or poem, unless these fruits can be presented in a persuasive and delectable manner? Hopkins has finally found a biographer who, like his editor and friend Bridges, sets him and his achievement forth, suffering and triumphant, to be known as fully as possible to all his admirers.

Gertrude M. White writes from West Bloomfield, Michigan.

For Immediate Service

CHRONICLES

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

TOLL FREE NUMBER

1-800-877-5459

The Global Villager

by Bill Kauffman

City Limits: Memories of a Small-Town Boy
by Terry Teachout
New York: Poseidon Press; 204 pp., $19.00

◆

Terry Teachout was a clumsy, nearsighted teacher's pet who grew up in Sikeston, Missouri, population 17,431 — "A Community That Works!" as its boosters trumpet.

Teachout stumbled through Little League and Boy Scouts, he tells us in his memoir, and distinguished himself in school as "the very worst kind of Goody Two-Shoes." He carried an olive-drab briefcase and once fell down a flight of stairs while trying to impress two girls. Teachout writes well of his own sissyhood. In fact, I wish he had given us more: the pain, the awkwardness, the pockmarks, the right-field misplays, the Friday nights spent squirreled away reading sci-fi paperbacks, the unrealized cheerleader fantasies. This is the book Teachout should have written: *Memories of a Small-Town Geek.*

As a teenager, Teachout finds partial social salvation through music. He takes up the violin and the bass guitar and discovers "the incomparable joy of doing something really well." He joins a hillbilly band, Sour Mash, and plays "I Saw the Light" in churches and Holiday Inn bars. Although his bandmates make him the butt of their crude jokes, Teachout finally belongs. What's more, he is — in a retro way — *cool.*

City Limits drags us along with Teachout to William Jewell College, where Greek-Independent rivalry flares; then to a bank teller's job in Kansas City, where he sees a stick-up man gunned down; then on to the University of Illinois, where he is understandably glum while manning a suicide hotline; finally, he musters up the moxie to bid farewell to the humdrum Midwest and stake his claim in New York City, where he falls in with a notorious gang of grifters, weirdos, and pansy-ass militarists, a/k/a the Manhattan Conservatives. His adventures with this motley crew will be related, no doubt, in Volume Two of the 35-year-old Mr. Teachout's autobiography-in-progress.

The post-Sikeston years are on the dull side, although Teachout sketches fine portraits of two musicians: decrepit Woody Herman, driving his Thundering Herd across the Midwest, and Harry Jenks, a pizza parlor pianist with no ambition but boundless talent — the antithesis, one suspects, of many of Teachout's current pals. As for Sikeston: well, the sturdy values that Teachout acquired back home he will carry within no matter how far he roams, blah blah blah. "I am like a million other Americans who grew up and moved away from the small towns of their childhood," he writes. "We cannot go back; we are not at home where we are. We are exiles from the lost heart of the land we love."

Come on. The "land we love" wasn't lost, it was abandoned. Take a good look around your hometown. The largest supermarket in mine was just bought by a Dutch concern; our banks are all headquartered elsewhere, and our city and school budgets are largely driven by federal and state mandate. Men making a livable wage are laid off and replaced by part-timers who get no benefits. In desperation, a neighboring town begs an out-of-state company to build an incinerator. The big houses — the mansions on the hill — are torn down. The brick factories in which my ancestors sweated and bled stand empty. Rats run through the corridors; wild boys sneak in through busted windows, swigging Malt Duck and blasting Megadeath. The smart kids who go off to college and become doctors never return; the louring sky darkens.

Is this happening in Sikeston, too? Here and there we catch glimpses of decay. "A shopping mall was built on the edge of town," Teachout notes, "and the downtown stores, one by one, started to sell off their stock and close their doors." The Interstate bypassed downtown Sikeston, eliminating drive-through commerce. But Teachout opts for the kinder, gentler clichés of Republican commercials: "Sikeston, Missouri, is still a place where people salute the flag and don't ask for receipts, where everybody knows who your parents were and what they did for a living. It is narrow and kind and decent and good, and I am blessed to have been raised in its shabby, forgiving bosom. It is my hometown; it is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

your hometown, too."

No, it's not. That "narrow and good and decent" mist is lazy Hollywood wistfulness; I half expected Ronald Reagan and Donna Reed to stroll down Teachout's street on the way to Pop's Soda Shop for a double malted. Neighborliness and a shared historical memory are among the wonderful features of small-town living, but Teachout's Sikeston is never individuated; we do not learn how and why it is different from every other place on earth. (As I'm sure it is.)

Once urbanized, Teachout is no John Howard Payne ("An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain; O, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!"). He plays the role of the wide-eyed rube, gushingly thankful to the Upper East Side dames who invite him to cocktail parties: "I sometimes feel like an awe-struck visitor from a poorer planet, looking at the shiny world around me and scratching my head in hopeless confusion." Nothing in *City Limits* will disturb your average Manhattan editor or Los Angeles screenwriter, who view that great flown-over vastitude connecting Citibank with Disney as one big blurry sprawl of Wonder Bread-eaters, weather monologists, and hooded David Duke fans.

Teachout takes it for granted that gifted or ambitious youngsters must flee to the city: "It would be useless for me to pretend that I will ever return to my hometown for good, or even for very long. I cannot pursue my hopes and dreams there." Sadly, he may be right. My technophile friends assure me that computers and fax machines and Federal Express have made it easier for our rustic Teachouts to survive, even thrive, while staying put. But these distance-shrinking devices assume that the market for one's work is in faraway cities; they simply bring New York City closer to Sikeston, and I'm not sure that's a good thing. How can we encourage the development of an indigenous, proudly parochial *Sikeston* culture? Not community players' productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* (which Teachout humorously describes) but vital, piquant works by, about, and for Missourians?

Darned if I know. The obvious promoters of local culture, small-city newspapers, have been swallowed by the Gannett/Knight-Ridder octopus, and the monster seems in no mood to disgorge them. Colleges and universities are usually alien nests of sheepskinned transients. Television stations are tiny links in huge chains. The global village has crushed the globe of villages.

What would have become of Terry Teachout had he stayed in Sikeston? He might have turned bitter, like other small-town boys with thwarted artistic ambitions, for instance Edgar Lee Masters' Archibald Higbie:

> I loathed you, Spoon River. I
> tried to rise above you,
> I was ashamed of you. I
> despised you
> As the place of my nativity.
> . . .
> There was no culture, you
> know, in Spoon River,
> And I burned with shame and
> held my peace.
> And what could I do, all
> covered over
> And weighted down with
> western soil,
> Except aspire, and pray for
> another
> Birth in the world, with all of
> Spoon River
> Rooted out of my soul?

Or maybe not.

According to the dust jacket, Teachout is "currently at work on a biography of H.L. Mencken." With a good college library up the road in Cape Girardeau, and a round-trip ticket to Baltimore in his pocket, Teachout could write that book in Sikeston. But he won't, and I guess I don't blame him. Here's why: when *USA Today* (itself a malignant tumor) recently asked Americans why they live where they live, 39 percent said "money," 33 percent said "jobs," and 12 percent said "stay close to relatives."

Is this the choice we face? Poverty and mom's Christmas cookies in Sikeston versus a satisfying, well-paying job in Babylon? The skilled man—the farmer, the carpenter, the cook—can have it both ways. But until we figure out how to bring job, money, and family into rough concordance, rather than conflict, many more Sikestons will lose many more Terry Teachouts; everybody's loss is nobody's gain.

Oh, well: you gotta have faith. So hey all you hicks—you uprooted jocks and eggheads and punks and wallflowers and dopers and drifters—why not go home? Sikeston and Fargo and Seneca Falls need you. Your hometowns are dying. Flowery idylls are appreciated, but your presence there is even better.

Bill Kauffman, author of the novel Every Man a King, *lives in his hometown of Batavia, New York.*

LIBERAL ARTS

CROSSFIRE

A federal judge in California recently ordered two crosses to be torn down in San Diego and La Mesa and forbade the latter from displaying a cross on its police uniforms and city vehicles. According to the *San Diego Union* last December, the American Civil Liberties Union filed two of the three suits "to preserve religious liberty in this county." Howard Kreisner, an atheist and one of the plaintiffs, reasoned that one of the crosses in question, a prominent local landmark, "in a local park characterizes San Diego as Christian and announces that Christianity is the official religion of San Diego." Officials from La Mesa, San Diego, and San Diego County contended that the crosses are war memorials, not primarily Christian symbols. Judge Gordon Thompson Jr. called this a "pretext" and was troubled by the "characterization of the Mount Soledad cross as a memorial at all," adding: "clearly, the Latin cross is not a benign symbol, and the perception that it is favored could well deter nonadherents from living in, visiting, or serving as employees of the City of La Mesa." The cases "would be entirely different," said Judge Thompson, if the parcels of land the crosses stand on were "privately rather than publicly owned."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Polymorph

by Gregory McNamee

More Shapes Than One
by Fred Chappell
New York: St. Martin's Press;
179 pp., $17.95

◆

Over the last three decades Fred Chappell has been steadily accumulating both an enviable publishing record—he has some twenty novels and collections of poems and stories to his credit—and a well-deserved reputation as one of the South's foremost men of letters. His latest book of short fictions, the aptly titled *More Shapes Than One*, may make the second designation less important; for Chappell, it is increasingly apparent, is a universalist whose imagination ranges over the globe. His native North Carolina informs his work and often provides its settings, but he is not to be automatically enlisted on any regional roll call.

Chappell's work is characterized by an exquisite attention to language and mood; his fiction is less concerned with action than with ideas, the more elevated the better. (In this Chappell resembles Borges and especially Poe, both of whom he obviously admires.) The stories in *More Shapes Than One* do not break any new ground—they are unmistakably Chappell's, told in voices we have come to recognize—but neither do they give up any.

The book does contain a few surprises. One is Chappell's turn to Europe for several of his tales, involving historical figures like French composer Jacques Offenbach, German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, and Swedish taxonomist Karl von Linné, who Chappell, in a neat dissection of the European passion for order, depicts as puzzling over a mysterious tropical plant that escapes all his attempts at classification. Another is his growing identification with the all but forgotten school of paranoiac fabulists published by Arkham House in the middle years of this century, notably the ghoulish H.P. Lovecraft, though Chappell is a better writer than any of them.

Three stories in particular illustrate Chappell's newfound fondness for the macabre: "The Somewhere Doors," "Mankind Journeys Through the Forest of Symbols," and "The Adder." The first involves a writer of *Weird Tales* persuasion who is co-opted by extraterrestrials; in another time and place it might have made a fine episode of *The Twilight Zone*. Chappell takes risks in treating such material, which could readily fall into pitfalls of formula. The second proceeds from one of the most irresistible openings imaginable—"There was a dream, and a gaudy big thing it was, too, and for six hours it had been blocking Highway 51 between Turkey Knob and Ember Forks"—to a story line that turns Faulknerian romanticism on its ear, and then some; Chappell is clearly having a joke on his own Southernness in detailing the effects of this "thick and goofy" renegade dream on the unsuspecting hill folk of North Carolina.

The last, however, is a true tour de force, a Borgesian nightmare in which a copy of the devilish *Necromicon*—an alchemical treatise of the early Middle Ages, also called "The Adder" for its imputed poisonous qualities—finds its way into the stock of a small-town antiquarian bookseller. There it begins to devour other books, vampirishly draining the force from their words while amassing ever more sinister powers. It is to Chappell's credit that this unlikely turn of events seems, by story's end, to be entirely plausible, and that a meek bookman should be the one to save the world from the forces of darkness. "The Adder" approaches perfection as a spooky tale, and is a sure bet to turn up henceforth in every horror anthology worth its sticker price.

Underlying Chappell's work, macabre or not, is a celebration of the act of creation. That Chappell loves to write, that, like Flaubert, he loves turning phrases until the mot juste sparkles on the page, is clear enough; his bookish characters, to the lowliest shotgun-shack pulp writer, vindicate the necessity and usefulness of the writer's craft, and attest to its mysteries:

> He could write only these melancholy twilight visions of things distant in time and space, stories that seem not entirely his, but gifts or visitations from a source at which he could not guess. His most difficult task was to find words for them; he was a shy man, naturally taciturn, and he considered himself unhandy with language. But when the stories came to him, the impulse to write them down was too strong to resist. The stories compelled him to write, to struggle with phrases in a way that felt incongruous to his personality. And so he wrote, stealing the hours from his bed, the strength from his body. Each stroke of the pen, every noun and comma and period, brought him closer to the beautiful release that he always felt, as he did now, upon completion of a tale.

More Shapes Than One, protean book that it is, abounds in such moments of "beautiful release." However improbable the directions some of his weirder fictions take, they add up to a thoroughly delightful collection that confirms, once again, Fred Chappell's importance to contemporary letters.

Gregory McNamee is a freelance writer living in Tucson, Arizona.

LIBERAL ARTS

GROWING UP

A team of UCLA researchers has studied the effects untraditional lifestyles have had on the children of hippies. Preliminary findings reported by the *Chicago Tribune* last December determined most children to be normal "based on IQ and standardized tests," despite the fact that "17 percent of the children have emotional or social problems, or drug or alcohol addictions." Of the 200 "hippie parents" studied, "most have gravitated toward the mainstream," becoming "more settled" as they approach middle age. As one parent commented, "It was one thing to be a kid but it's another thing to have a kid."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter From Latvia

by Kelly Cherry

Choosing Independence

◆

There are those moments in which you travel back to some time and place you visited earlier. A trick of light, a confluence of sounds on a summer evening. Sometimes I am fooled into thinking that I am back in Latvia, where August nights around a white wrought-iron table on the grass lasted the length of a candle.

For a moment, then, I imagine what life would have been like had Brezhnev's regime not been determined to prevent the marriage of a Latvian citizen and an American woman who intended to live there. Marriage is one of the rights protected by the Final Act of the Helsinki Accords, but the KGB, which devoted many man-hours to confiscating our love letters and recording sweet nothings, evidently cared nothing for marriage. Or for the Helsinki Accords.

Many of those nights we spent, my fiancé and I, in a room whose wood floor was painted blue and whose three large windows were edged with vines as if they were a gift wrapped with a green ribbon. The room had been turned over to us by the daughter of a family with theatrical ties to Bertolt Brecht. Following in the family tradition, she has gone on to establish herself as a stage director. Sometimes she would visit us, bringing another friend or two, and we would all have tea at a wrought-iron table on the other side of the windows, whispering our ideas about art, music, drama, poetry. We kept our voices low because there could be microphones. Already, my fiancé had been threatened by the Central Committee, warned of what might happen to him, his family, his career, if he continued to see me. Futilely, we had tried to reassure Soviet authorities that he had no intention of emigrating.

In fact, the man I was going to marry, the composer Imant Kalnin, could not think of leaving his country. For one thing, it was his *country*—a nation whose independence the Soviet Union recognized in the 1920 Treaty of Riga, declaring that the Soviet Union "for eternal times renounces all sovereign rights over the Latvian people and territory." (I could think of living there, because the U.N. charter specified that I could retain my U.S. citizenship and passport.)

"Eternal times" lasted until 1939, when a secret pact between Hitler and Stalin placed Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia under Soviet domination.

Though the spirit of *glasnost* had prompted the Kremlin to admit the existence of this secret and illicit protocol, and though the August coup resulted in Soviet recognition of Baltic independence, little over a year ago the *New York Times* quoted Mikhail Gorbachev as saying that the entrance of the Baltic republics into the Soviet Union was "the choice made by their peoples." Choice? Was it a choice to vote when, if you did not, you were not permitted to work? Was it a choice to vote when you were escorted to the polls by eight hundred thousand Red Army troops? Was it a choice when, slipping up, the Communist Party announced its candidates as winners in foreign newspapers an entire day *before* the votes had been counted?

That there was *no* choice had been acknowledged all along by the United States and other Western governments, which refused to recognize, legally, the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. Alas, our public policy on this issue for all these years was a tragic contradiction of precisely those democratic principles President Bush avows to uphold. How could we not accord full diplomatic recognition to nations whose independence we insisted on? Not to do this was to violate logic—and human lives.

There was a moral fault line here, a crack through which the hidden village of realpolitik could be glimpsed, beneath the fine-sounding surface of speeches about democracy. But recently, following the August coup, we were in a remarkable position to correct ourselves: not only the Baltic countries, but we the people, too, had been given a second chance.

We the people—and they the people, for many Russians and other Soviet citizens, disagreeing with Gorbachev, believed the Baltic nations were legally independent and quickly voted to acknowledge the fact—had been given a chance to accord full diplomatic recognition to these small countries without running any risk of "destabilizing" the world situation. Could we reject this great gift, this gift that was like a view through green-ribboned windows opening onto the past, this gift of an opportunity to stand, peacefully yet firmly—and more wonderfully still, firmly yet peacefully—for *ourselves*? Because to affirm Baltic independence was to reaffirm our own.

Waiting for President Bush to take a stand—after Iceland! after Russia! after Mongolia!—I watched television, as did so many others. And I watched as a cameraman panned the interior of the KGB headquarters in downtown Riga. Then: a close-up of coffee cups abandoned on a table, and an announcer's voiceover explaining that employees had fled just seconds before. The half-drunk coffee, said the announcer, was still warm. File drawers were open or turned over; some of the employees had taken some of the files with them. I stared at the screen, knowing that somewhere in that building was the file the authorities had kept on Imant and me. It was a file that had been waved in front of Imant by a KGB colonel during repeated interrogations. It contained photographs, transcripts of telephone calls, the confiscated letters. *Maybe*, I thought, with a rising sense of triumph, *it's been put through a paper shredder.*

Those were stolen words, stolen pictures; at the same time, it occurred to me that the KGB had never even really succeeded in stealing these memories from our lives, no matter how thick their file was, because, as Imant had asked me to do, I had saved them in my book *The Exiled Heart*, an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

examination of the nature of meaning. What was the meaning of those memories? Those August nights on which we talked about art, music, drama, and poetry were, perhaps, our own declaration of independence. Our ideas were independent, we seem to have been saying, our feelings couldn't be dictated, and ideas and feelings would outlast any bureaucracy, because serious art survives.

I believe that, just as I believe that it is an artist's responsibility to do everything possible to safeguard his or her own independence from all who would encroach upon it. So long as an artist has any choice at all, the artist must, as it were, choose independence.

In Latvian folklore, the Castle of Light is a symbol of Latvia's independence. When the Black Knight stole the key to the castle from the Bear-Slayer, the castle sank into the Daugava, darkened and drowned. The Castle of Light has been returned to its foundation, but the United States was not among the first to cheer its early (or late, but better late than never) light. In this instance at least, countries around the world revealed themselves as caring more for the principles of democracy than the United States. We let Gorbachev make the choice for us, privileging an old-boy network above principle.

Did we simply not have the courage of our convictions? Did we simply not have any convictions?

Kelly Cherry writes from Madison, Wisconsin.

Letter From Canada

by Kenneth McDonald

A Guide to Political Reform

◆

In May 1987 a meeting of about two hundred delegates from the four Western provinces met in Vancouver to discuss a common concern: alienation of Western Canada that resulted from the concentration of political power in an Ottawa largely controlled by Ontario and Quebec. Most of the delegates were small "c" conservatives who believed in individual freedom, free enterprise, and traditional values. Five months later at a founding convention in Winnipeg, the Reform Party of Canada committed itself to developing policies within three main themes: more effective representation of the West; more accountability by members of Parliament; and a small "c" conservative economic agenda.

The intervening years have seen the fledgling party grow from three thousand members to more than ninety thousand, and from a Western regional base to a federal party active in all provinces except Quebec. (Although many of its policies might appeal to Quebecers' innate conservatism, the party sees little point in pursuing this while the province persists in its flirtation with sovereignty. By the same token it notes the contradiction facing a prime minister from Quebec, who like any prime minister is dependent upon Quebec votes for electoral victory, in presuming to negotiate for Canada.)

Reform's elected leader is 49-year-old Preston Manning, a successful management consultant who took no active part in politics from 1967, when his father Ernest retired after 25 years as premier of Alberta, until 1987. During that period, however, he developed his vision of a New Canada, which he described in an October 29, 1990, interview with *Maclean's* as "a place where citizens insist that governments live within their means, where real jobs with real incomes are provided not by government but by internationally competitive, environmentally sustainable businesses and industries. The New Canada is a place where Parliament works because it has been reformed, where the national government is dedicated to the proposition that all Canadians should be treated equally without regard to race, language and culture."

The party published a blue book of principles and policies that has now been revised to incorporate changes adopted by resolutions of the party's Assembly in Saskatoon in April of 1991. In his foreword, Manning contrasts the Old with the New Canada his party is dedicated to defining and building. The Old Canada's leaders "have focused their attention, not on building a federation of equal provinces, but on building a federation of founding peoples (the English and French) distinguished by official languages policy and government-supported culture." That Old Canada, he maintains, is one of top-down governments living beyond their means and sheltering behind an undemocratic Parliament emasculated by strict party discipline—and it is ill-prepared to compete in the world's emerging free-market, free-trade environment. A New Canada "must be a *federation of provinces*, not a federation of founding races or ethnic groups."

If there is one constant thread that weaves its way through the 39-page book it is a profound belief in the common sense of the common people. Let the people participate directly in making and amending their constitution. Institute binding referenda, voters' initiatives, and recall. Make elected representatives accountable not to the party hierarchy but to the people who elected them and whose views they are expected to express. Consult the people before major policy decisions are made. Change the appointed Senate (which allots 24 seats each to Ontario and Quebec, but only six each to the other provinces) to one that is elected, has equal representation from each province, and an effective veto over House of Commons legislation.

Trusting the people is reflected in economic policy (free enterprise, private property, freedom of contract, and free markets), in trade and agriculture (scrap inter-provincial trade barriers, reduce and eventually eliminate government subsidies), in energy (private sector development, no government subsidies, grants, loan guarantees, or special tax treatment), monetary policy (slow, steady growth in money supply, regional inputs to fiscal policy), a more competitive banking system, and constructive relations between unions and employers.

Governments should look upon tax revenues as "funds held in trust." Governments and the civil servants, politicians and political parties of which they are composed exist to serve the people. Reform's proposals for returning Canada's governments to fiscal responsibility include eliminating or reducing expenditure on a variety of activities: thick layers of middle management in the civil service; official bilingualism, multiculturalism, and government ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

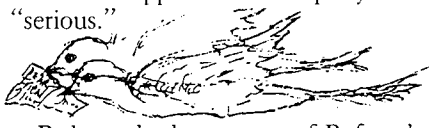
vertising; special interest advocacy groups; foreign aid; subsidies and tax concessions to business; Crown corporations (to be sold); and universal social programs such as daycare.

Tax reform would be undertaken with the principal objective of raising funds to pay for government programs the people approve. The party opposes the use of tax concessions in attempts to manipulate investment behavior and industrial structure. All consumption taxes should be visible, and a flat tax is desirable.

Social reform encompasses the welfare state, language and culture, and immigration. The Reform Party believes that although the truly indigent must be cared for, the legitimate role of government is to do for people "whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all—or do as well—for themselves individually or through non-governmental organizations." It supports a recognition of French in Quebec and English elsewhere as the languages of work and society, upholds the right of individuals or groups to preserve cultural heritages, but opposes government intervention in cultural matters and would abolish the federal department of multiculturalism. It would orient immigration policy toward Canada's economic needs, but here again would submit all proposed changes to referendum.

How do these proposals sit with the Canadian public? The 1988 federal election came too soon after the party's founding to judge. Nevertheless, it ran candidates in 72 of the 282 ridings, got 2.1 percent of the popular vote, and although it failed to win a seat it took votes away from the winning Progressive Conservatives in a dozen or more close-run ridings. Manning ran against former prime minister Joe Clark (PC) in Alberta and came an easy second to him with 11,152 votes against his 17,847. In another Alberta riding, however, the PC winner died five days later, and when the obligatory by-election was called in April 1989, Reform candidate Deborah Grey—who had come a close fourth in the general election—won handily with 11,154 votes, as many as the other three candidates combined. Six months later, the Alberta government held an unprecedented election for one of its Senate seats that had fallen vacant, and Reform's Stanley Waters won it with almost twice as many votes as the runner-up.

In the January 6, 1992, issue of *Maclean's*, its Decima poll rated support for the party at 59 percent in Manning's native Alberta and an average of 46 percent in the nine English-speaking provinces. Richard Johnston, a University of British Columbia political scientist, was quoted as saying that this did not necessarily mean that 46 percent of English Canadians would vote for Reform in the next election, but that support for the party was "serious."



Perhaps the best gauge of Reform's success is the reaction to it. The three older parties attack it openly. The prevailing left-liberal print and electronic press, and the New Class it panders to, focus on the immigration, language, and multicultural policies that are their natural targets. But these, polls show, are prime irritants to a majority of Canadians—the ignored majority that Manning appeals to.

The fact is that Reform's proposals are not new; they have bubbled for years in the newsletters of voluntary groups—such as the 40,000 member National Citizens' Coalition—that advocate more freedom through less government. But so long as the ideas were rejected by the three old-line parties, there could be no representative voice in Parliament; the groups could offer no prospect of tangible results. Now, their supporters have somewhere to turn.

Thus does Preston Manning stand to reap where many others sowed. He had not only the political wit to see a suppressed majority yearning for reform, but the organizing ability and even more the personal guts and integrity to stake out ground on which he is now being attacked. In the next federal election (1992 or 1993), his party will win seats. Whether they are enough to give it a balance of power is less important than the fact that it will be voicing opinions in national debates that have not been heard for a generation.

Kenneth McDonald is a freelance writer living in Toronto.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Seeing the Wizard Off

◆

A historical sense can be a wonderful thing to have. Not long ago, for instance, someone reminded me that when Christianity was as old as Islam is now, the Inquisition was going full tilt. When Islam gets to be two thousand years old, he suggested, maybe it'll be as guilt-ridden and effete as Christianity has become. I find that comforting, don't you?

Last November I called on history to console a friend who'd recently moved to Baton Rouge and found himself dismayed by the gubernatorial contest between Edwin Edwards and David Duke. Having to choose between a candidate known as the "Silver Zipper" and another billed as a "Nazi for the 90's" made him—well, uncomfortable. I pointed out that whoever won wouldn't be the worst governor Louisiana ever had; in fact, he probably wouldn't even be the worst governor in living memory. For some reason, that didn't cheer him up.

Boy, was I wrong when I complained a couple of years ago in this magazine that Southern politics have become boring. I was wrong that they've become boring, and I was wrong to complain. I will stay after class and write 500 times: "Boring is not necessarily bad."

What went awry in the land of dreamy dreams? Four or five years ago, James Moffett, head of the Louisiana Council for Fiscal Reform, was telling the *Wall Street Journal* that "a modern era of politics is fixing to evolve" in his state. Yet here was a Baton Rouge Junior Leaguer saying in the *Washington Post* that she was going to vote for Duke because, unlike Edwards, he wouldn't last more than four years in office and maybe somebody would shoot him sooner than that. She wasn't the only Louisianan talking wistfully about the ".38 calibre recall" that took out Huey Long. How did matters get that out of hand?

The problem, of course, went back to the primary, when roughly two-thirds of the voters voted against each of the three major candidates. In each

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

case the majority was right. When Buddy Roemer, the Democrat-turned-Republican incumbent flake, proved to be as inept at campaigning as at governing and came in third, he set up the Edwards-Duke contest.

Now, not even National Public Radio tried to present *that* as a straight-up morality play. In bed with the oil and chemical companies, a gambler and womanizer, oft-indicted (though ne'er convicted), the former governor is an anachronism, a caricature of the sort of pol our nation's newly puritanical press corps eats for lunch. Edwards, whose sense of humor is the best thing about him, told reporters he wasn't going to talk about the Duke's past "because he might talk about mine," and there's a lot there to talk about. Many Louisianans had simply never dreamed of voting for Edwards under *any* circumstances, and it apparently took them a while to realize that voting for the Wiz because you couldn't abide the Cajun Prince would have been like taking a blowtorch to your case of athlete's foot.

In some ways the national attention made it worse. The networks and newsmagazines, like the horrified Louisiana business community, were almost daring Louisianans to vote for David Duke, and that was a mistake. You don't dare Southerners to do anything you don't really want us to do. For every Louisianan who was embarrassed by what the readers of the *New York Times* were thinking, I'm sure another was tempted to vote for Duke just to show he wasn't chicken.

Besides, Duke wasn't exactly wrong on "the issues." Most Louisianans agreed with him on those—at least those issues he talked about. So did lots of folks outside Louisiana (40 percent of Duke's campaign funds came from out of state). For that matter, so did I. And so did many black Southerners, as the polls (and I) have been saying for some time, and as the Clarence Thomas hearings could have taught us, had we not been distracted by Anita Hill and the Atlanta Braves.

By the way, *how about those Braves?* They almost avenged the burning of Atlanta, didn't they? Let the spoilsports from the American Indian Movement take their whining to that sanctuary for guilt-ridden liberals with a football team called the Redskins: down in Atlanta, even Jimmy Carter was doing the tomahawk chop. So was Hanoi Jane, although she came up with a more sensitive version, sort of a tomahawk pat. The Reverend Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference told ESPN that he could see the Native Americans' point: after all, if the team was the Atlanta Negroes and all the fans waved little switchblades, he'd be annoyed. He undercut his argument, though, when he went on to say that folks wouldn't like it if the team was the Atlanta Rednecks and fans waved little nooses. Maybe somebody would find that offensive, but not *rednecks*: I know guys who could really get into that.

Anyway, back to Louisiana. As I was saying, lots of black Southerners are every bit as conservative as David Duke was talking, on the issues he was talking about. It isn't just whites who want welfare reform, and crime control, and lower taxes. But it's remarkable that even four percent of Louisiana's black voters could bring themselves to pull the lever for a former Grand Wizard, even one who says he now talks to Jesus every day.

A lot of white Louisianans weren't ready to do it either. Newspapers all over the country got a chuckle out of the bumper stickers that said "Vote for the Crook: It's Important," but three out of five voters did just that. True, Duke got 55 percent of the white vote and no doubt we'll be hearing that he lost because of black bloc-voting, but he would have had fewer white votes if blacks hadn't turned out so strongly against him. Either (1) blacks vote their interests, or (2) white fear of black power is allayed. Whichever: Duke loses.

Basically, the numbers suggest that Edwards won because he picked up three-quarters of the Roemer voters, most of them conservative white Republicans, I'm sure—people who had to swallow hard to vote for Edwards, but did it, when the chips were down. Partly this was snobbery: country-club Republicans don't want to be governed by a low-life rabble-rouser with a cheap nose job, a political Jimmy Swaggart. (True, political life forms don't come much lower than Edwin Edwards, but at least he's amusing.) Partly, the polls showed, it was also economic concern. Corruption is expensive, but the Edwards campaign argued that a Duke victory would be even more costly, making it harder to recruit everything from factories and tourists to players for the LSU football team. At the end, Duke was reduced to saying, in effect, "Would *not*."

Surely even more important, though, was the recognition that some things are more important than "issues." Things like—oh, for instance, sin. The American people have always known that, even if political junkies tend to forget it.

Yes, Jesus consorted with sinners, and he may even consort with David Duke. We have to believe that no one is beyond redemption, and maybe there are Baptists willing to take Duke's word that he's found it. Those of us from less forgiving traditions, though, would like more evidence than just some testifying.

Duke talked about his "youthful indiscretions," and obviously he has learned discretion somewhere along the way, but that's not the point. Some "indiscretions" call for more than regret, they call for penance—lots of it. Some of us think a repentant Nazi ought to be off working with lepers or something, not running for governor.

It looks as if that view is shared by a good many Louisianans. Enough of them, anyway.

John Shelton Reed, who writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is an Episcopalian and a country-club Republican manqué.

M·O·V·I·N·G·?

LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

To assure uninterrupted delivery of *Chronicles*, please notify us in advance. Send change of address on this form with the mailing label from your latest issue of *Chronicles* to: Subscription Department, *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, Illinois 61054.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Politics of Rape

by Betsy Clarke

When an acquitted William Kennedy Smith emerged from the Florida courtroom last December declaring his faith in the system, a viewer could only query, "Why?" There stood a young man who was indicted for rape and forced to spend over one million dollars defending himself on the basis of the word of one person, the word being uncorroborated by either physical or direct evidence and in fact contradicted by both. An ordinary investigation of these accusations should have resulted in findings that the trial disclosed. Not only was there reasonable doubt that Smith committed a crime, there was not even probable cause that a crime had been committed.

At first, disappointed feminists interviewed after the trial blamed the reasonable doubt standard as the barrier to a criminal conviction. Then omitted evidence of Smith's earlier sexual activity became the scapegoat. But when ABC newsman Morton Dean asked a correspondent, "Do you think William Smith will file civil charges against the woman for making false accusations?" we knew the game was over.

Of special interest were the grave reactions to the verdict by counselors in rape crisis centers. Some network correspondents intoned of "dark days" for women and "rape victims" in particular as a result of the jury's failure to believe the accuser. None of them mentioned constitutional rights of the accused, the rules of evidence, or the state's burden of proof. Incredibly, even the prosecutor in her closing arguments indicated to the jury that Smith's attempt to discredit his accuser was somehow dirty pool. Clearly, politics and gender have destroyed the integrity of our judicial system in cases involving charges of rape.

Last year was the bicentennial of the Sixth Amendment, which identifies rights of criminal defendants. The Sixth Amendment entitles a defendant, among other things, "to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor." The Fourteenth Amendment, which came along in 1868, guarantees that any person, including a criminal defendant, shall not be "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." A criminal defendant, in short, gets to defend himself.

Over the past several decades, the dominant liberal elites have lectured us ad nauseam about the rights of criminal defendants. An October 1991 article in the *Indianapolis Star*, ominously entitled "Some fear court will change rights of women, minorities," reported that in the 1990-91 term, the Supreme Court "killed or damaged nine legal precedents [and] eight of those rulings were victims of the court's continuing trend of reducing the rights of criminal defendants while expanding the power of police and prosecutors." And so we are relentlessly lectured about the rights of the accused: how important they are in protecting the innocent as well as the culpable, how 'tis better that guilty men go free than that one innocent man be imprisoned unjustly, and how in any event crime is caused by socioeconomic factors for which society bears primary blame. Crime is the price we must pay for creating an unjust society.

Then the liberal elites discovered rape, which led inexorably to rapists, which led in turn to arrests in ghetto neighborhoods and trailer courts, which automatically invoked all sorts of real and imagined presumptions as to the individual's innocence — which then headed down a collision course with modern feminism. Suddenly, feminists developed both an appetite for law and order and an increased penchant for hypocrisy. Here is the problem. If the power of the state over the individual sends chills down your spine, if you explain the causes of crime in terms of sociology rather than free will, and if you find crime not only an inevitable product of an unjust society but an understandable and even justified response, as a sensitive and sensitized individual, how are you to approach the sorry fact of victimized, violated women?

The tension between competing sensitivities in our liberal elites has resulted in contorted reasoning, corrupted language, and violation of principle on the subject of rape. Their challenge, of course, is to switch their sympathies from the quixotic struggle of the accused to that of the powerhouse state and all its agencies — the police, the prosecutor (the accusing witness now known as the prosecutrix), the attorney general, and ultimately the governor — without seeming to abandon their high-minded allegiance to the railroaded underdog.

Faced with all sorts of uncomfortable contradictions about their view of rape and rapists, feminists and their uneasy comrades began by establishing a hierarchy of victimization, making sure to place women at the very bottom, lower than any group whose unfortunate characteristics might be compatible with being male. Consequently, in any contest about who is most aggrieved, women must appear to be the sorriest of all specimens. Feminists effected this plan by in part dismantling and redesigning the definition of rape so as to universalize this violation of the female. A member

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Women's Studies department at Mount Holyoke, for example, has instructed her students that rape is "any unwanted sexual contact." A November 1991 *Teen* magazine author obfuscates, but tries to leave the impression that rape is considerably less invasive than it is. As she writes in an article titled "Acquaintance Rape," "if someone you know does something sexually to you *against your will*, then you have been violated." But Susan Brownmiller's definition, as put forth in her 1975 book *Against Our Will*, still seems the most accurate: "If a woman chooses not to have intercourse with a specific man and the man chooses to proceed against her will, that is a criminal act of rape."

The payoffs for promoters of a loose definition of rape are threefold. First, they can use the redefinition to exaggerate the number of rape victims so as to include nearly every female; virtually every heterosexual male, not just the poor and minority convicts who end up in prison, might therefore be considered a rapist. Second, they can preempt any queries as to the accuser's credibility by hurling epithets such as "sexist" and "insensitive" at those who want a closer look at her story. Those who fail to rush to condemn the accused therefore play into feminist hands. Finally, because their promiscuous accusations have so diluted the impact of the word "rape," feminists can indignantly complain that the male power structure does not take "rape victims" seriously.

The legal definition of rape varies slightly from state to state, but at a minimum the law requires the state to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused knowingly or intentionally had sexual intercourse with a member of the opposite sex when that person was compelled by force or was deemed incapable of giving consent to such an act. Proof of the elements cannot be fudged. In other words, holding a girlfriend's hand against her will is not rape. Seduction, however irresponsibly engaged in, is not rape. Feminist lobbying, however, has had an impact. In Indiana, as well as in some other states, the law now allows prosecution of a husband for the rape of his wife, though a charge of assault more accurately describes the act. Some state legislatures have taken this idea so far that, as stated in Missouri law, even "a woman can be guilty of rape under this provision."

It seems reasonable enough to require some sort of evidence that all of the elements of this violent crime have been committed before sentencing a person to prison. Yet the modern feminist responds to this observation with two retorts: one, that rape is whatever I say it is, and two, that an accusation should be tantamount to a conviction. Consequently, most legislatures, looking for that rare opportunity to appeal to both their law-and-order and feminist constituencies, have rigged the rules of evidence so that those accused of rape cannot present to a jury evidence in their defense. The "rape shield statutes" prohibit the defense from submitting relevant evidence of the prosecutrix's past sexual conduct and are particularly dangerous because a conviction for rape can rest on the testimony of the accuser without any corroborating physical evidence. Designed initially to avoid planting the notion in the juror's mind that a woman with an active sexual history is either more likely to lie under oath or to give consent to sexual activity than a person without such a history, trial courts now routinely deny defendants the right to rebut the state's case. Evidence showing their accuser's bias, and in some states even evidence of past consensual sex between the accuser and accused, is often prohibited.

Courts justify such outrages by invoking a "societal interest" in seeing that victims feel protected enough by the judicial system to report sex crimes. As one federal judge pontificated in 1991, "The right of a petitioner to present relevant and competent evidence is not absolute and may bow to accommodate other interests in the criminal trial process." Other than determining guilt or innocence based on relevant and competent evidence? Furthermore, even the exceptional bit of admissible evidence that will reveal the prosecutrix's past sexual conduct must overcome all sorts of procedural hurdles of advance notice and special hearings in order to get before a jury.

Arguing that rape is grossly underreported, the supposedly antiestablishment feminists have used their leverage with the government to bolster the power of the state over the criminal defendant. But some evidence suggests that rape may be an *overreported* crime. Ask Gary Dotson, who served 12 years in prison (four of them after the prosecutrix recanted) for a rape he did not commit, if women fear alerting authorities to this crime. The Marion County (Indianapolis) Justice Agency reports that only slightly more than half of Class A (using a deadly weapon or deadly force) rape cases resulted in conviction in 1990, and only 28 of 82 Class B, frequently acquaintance rapes, resulted in conviction during the same period, with 31 of them resulting in acquittal or dismissal. Yet, a book aimed at teenagers entitled *Date Rape*, by Frances Shuker-Haines, advises, "Your job is to believe your friend [when she says she has been raped]. If she feels she was raped, she was raped. Don't question it."

While a source of satisfaction to feminists, the rape shield statutes apply in criminal trials only. For example, newspapers and attorneys bringing civil defamation suits can ignore these statutes in their quest for relevant and competent evidence pertaining to the parties' behavior. Three years ago, *Ms.* reported that males accused of rape were filing suits for defamation of character, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and malicious prosecution against their accusers. The woman's sexual history will be fair game in such suits.

But the First Amendment is the real source of feminist distress in rape cases. Feminists want the accuser's identity suppressed by the media for the reasons the rest of us want it published: her identity is relevant to assessing the integrity of her charges and her moral character, otherwise known as her credibility. Commentators from law-and-order prosecutors to left-wing writers have beseeched the media to lay off accusers, explaining, as did the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, "The ultimate issue of guilt or innocence is one for a jury, which has

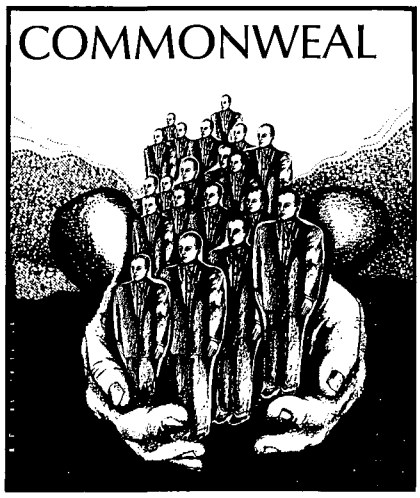
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the opportunity to hear all relevant evidence in the case." But, of course, all relevant evidence is precisely what the jury will *not* hear. Dishonest and incompetent though they are, the media now offer the only avenue the public has to learn the full truth surrounding rape charges. Even the ACLU opposes anonymity for accusers.

At last we come to the presumption of innocence that criminal defendants supposedly enjoy, and again liberals are of two minds on this subject. On the one hand are the feminists, feisty with their newly minted definitions and sensitivities, accosting anyone who withholds judgment on the validity of the charges until all the evidence is in. On the other hand are the few ultra civil-libertarian types who insist that society must declare a criminal defendant innocent of all charges until a verdict of guilty is read. Wrote one very liberal *Indianapolis Star* columnist on the feminist reaction to Mike Tyson's rape indictment, "Those who would call someone a criminal because the state says so are swinging a rope." Actually, the presumption of innocence is nothing more (but nothing less) than an evidentiary presumption at trial. An accusation cannot act as a conviction, but it would not have been unconstitutional, for example, for the federal boxing commission to hold its own hearing of the evidence in the Mike Tyson case. If the evidence had seemed convincing, Tyson's title fight could have been canceled without upsetting the presumption of innocence to which he is entitled as his criminal trial begins.

The trends in our law and culture with regard to rape remain inconsistent and contradictory, but two things are clear. As the definition of rape becomes looser, convictions become harder to obtain, and as society becomes freer in the sexual activity it will tolerate, the state becomes more protective of what sexual behavior it will allow. Caught in the middle of these trends and societal interests are the accused rapist and the accuser. Fair trial, anyone?

Betsy Clarke is a former assistant public defender for the state of Missouri and currently practices law in Indianapolis.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Reproductive Tyranny

by Anne Marie Morgan

The New Technology of Fertility Control

Absolute control of women over fertility has been the unparalleled dream of radical feminists for decades. Millions of women now view this aspiration as their sacrosanct right and have, with the advent of anti-fertility and other reproductive technologies, exercised this new right vigorously. This feminist dream, however, is fraught with irony. Many of the very women who have postponed childbearing through devices, hormones, chemicals, and surgery in order to pursue career and lifestyle, later find themselves infertile or sterile, and it is often then that they discover that they want children after all and begin pursuing biological children of their own with the same fervor with which they initially avoided them. For these women, fertility-control technology has ultimately resulted in helplessness and a lack of control over fertility — the opposite effect of what was intended.

Reasons abound for the modern phenomenon of escalating rates of infertility. A principal cause is actual postponement of childbearing, since a woman's fertility is age-related: it begins a gradual decline in her 20's, and by the age of 35, it is reduced by 31 percent, declining more rapidly thereafter.

Another irony of the feminist revolution is that some of the very technologies said to liberate women — or sexual practices made possible by those technologies — are at the root of many subsequent infertility problems. The devastation precipitated by the intrauterine device, the Dalkon Shield, was only the tip of the iceberg. Adolescents having abortions, because of their likelihood of experiencing cervical injury during the procedure, have a greater risk of miscarriage in future pregnancies. The thousands of mid- or late-term abortions performed on women every year are far more likely to cause damage to reproductive organs and future fertility than are first-trimester abortions. Fully 15,000 women who were voluntarily sterilized seek to have the procedure reversed every year. The widespread use of nonbarrier methods of contraception — oral contraceptives — fostered the unintended consequence of endemic sexually transmitted diseases, at a rate of at least 12 *million* new cases in the United States every year. The results for women's health and fertility have been disastrous.

The enormity of the problem of disease needs to be emphasized. Because the emotive spotlight has been on the HIV virus, the attentive public is not fully cognizant of the scope of this problem and how women have been harmed by this proliferation of disease. Fully one *million* young women contract Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) every year, and because of the severity of the infections in their reproductive systems a minimum of 10 percent of them become sterile every year. Multiple sexual partners are the single greatest factor in contracting PID. Massive infections are also the principal cause of the startling increase in rates of ectopic or tubal pregnancies, which are often not only a permanent obstacle to fertility but the *leading* cause of maternal deaths among women today.

Chlamydia has become the disease most frequently contracted by young women, and an astonishing one out of five single women (one out of four in urban areas) has contracted it. Because it can remain in a woman's body for two years without major symptoms, chlamydia is easily and unknowingly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transmitted to males, who rarely manifest symptoms (and who also may become infertile). Chlamydia-induced PID carries a sterility rate of 25 percent with a single episode; with a second subsequent episode, the rate of sterility increases to 50 percent. There are 20 million known cases of incurable herpes; antibiotic-resistant strains of gonorrhea, syphilis, and the human papilloma virus (often followed by cervical cancer) all are on the increase in the United States, and all have wreaked havoc with the bodies and fertility of women and men. The "cures," which were to liberate women, have gone the way of many other social innovations: they have resulted in new maladies. Forty-five percent of American couples now have difficulty conceiving or are unable to have children.

Enter the brave new (but booming) business of reproductive technology. Infertility has given the practitioners of the new technology an unprecedented window of opportunity. This is a world where, in the cloak of compassion, technologies to enable women to conceive and/or bear biological children of their own have turned childbearing into profitable commercial businesses.

It is widely acknowledged that from the conception of the new reproductive technologies, the experiments exploited unsuspecting women, their bodies, tissues, harvested ovum, and tiny unborn offspring. Experiments by Dr. John Rock in the 1940's used poor, mostly Catholic women patients at the Free Hospital for Women in Massachusetts. Deliberately scheduling women for surgery at strategic times, Rock harvested eggs and fertilized embryos from surgically removed uteri, ovaries, and fallopian tubes of unknowingly pregnant women. British animal geneticist Robert G. Edwards, credited with the first test-tube human fertilization, also extracted ova from women, inseminated them artificially, and studied and mounted the embryos conceived without the knowledge of the donor-mothers.

From this ignominious beginning, the commercial business of reproduction has refined its technology and expanded into a huge, largely unregulated industry. Nearly 250 fertility clinics have opened in the last decade, while Americans spend one *billion* dollars every year in attempts to become pregnant. The number of office visits for fertility services are estimated at over two million visits annually. Women and men subject themselves to an extensive and costly variety of diagnostic tests and therapeutic treatments. It is not unusual for a couple to spend up to $35,000 for a course of therapies.

Artificial insemination using male gametes is one well-known technique that is widely used by the reproductive industry to treat some infertility problems, such as low sperm counts. Sperm banks are consequently becoming more popular, particularly among single women. The *New York Times* recently reported that thousands of lesbians are using this technique to become pregnant. Not only is there an absence of screening regulations for potential mothers, but the California Supreme Court and a New Jersey court have both ruled that a child so conceived does not have a "natural father," that the anonymous donor is not the child's "father."

Inducement of superovulation through use of fertility drugs, antibiotic therapy, and surgery to correct blocked fallopian tubes are other common treatments. Yet, in spite of the technological advances, 20 percent are diagnosed as infertile for unknown reasons. Some physicians contend that the fertility treatments are a waste of effort and money, since many of the couples would have eventually become pregnant anyway. For example, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported findings from a follow-up study of over 1,100 infertile couples: 44 percent of the couples treated for infertility conceived, but 35 percent eventually conceived without treatment. This has led to a debate about the one-year criterion for diagnosing infertility—a criterion that helped create a heightened demand for fertility services.

In vitro fertilization is the reproductive technology that has received the most publicity since the first test-tube baby was born in 1978. The fertilization in petri dishes of male and female gametes opened up new possibilities for women who could not conceive but were able to bear children. The gametes donated could be from the birth mother and father, a selected donor mother or father, anonymous donor, or various combinations of each. The success rate (meaning a live birth) for in vitro fertilization is a mere 5.6 percent worldwide and only 10 percent in the United States, and the costs are exorbitantly high. Yet, there are about 15,000 in vitro attempts every year by American couples who are willing to do anything to have a baby.

It is this technology that closely resembles manufacturing of commodities—quality control included. Usually, several eggs are harvested and fertilized. The newly developing embryos may be selectively destroyed before implantation, and they are closely watched for "abnormalities." Multiple embryo implants have been found to increase the success rate of impregnation, but they also may result in multiple pregnancies. New techniques of "embryo reduction" of multiple pregnancies were therefore developed to destroy selectively the "extra" embryos—so as to increase the probability of a favorable outcome for the remaining baby. There are also new techniques of "embryo transfer"—washed out (through lavage) of the body of one woman and implanted into the body of another. Researchers have also developed a means of quick-freezing live embryos for later implantation. These egregious practices have occurred in part because *there is no state regulation or accountability over them.* Astoundingly, the reproductive technologists are a self-regulating, closed society.

Legislation has focused less on regulating these practices than on beefing them up. A bill proposed by Representative Pat Schroeder would have required insurance infertility coverage for two million federal employees. A failed legislative proposal in Virginia would have required all insurance companies to include infertility treatments in their coverage, as does Massachusetts. At the same time, Virginia successfully amended its informed consent law to require infertility clinics to simply inform patients of the averages of successful treatments. Finally, a law was proposed in Virginia to dispose of embryos should a couple divorce or change their mind—by making the embryos the property of the facility, rather than committed to the custody of the biological parents.

Some couples want a biological child of their own, but the woman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

either cannot—or is unwilling to—go through nine months of pregnancy: hence surrogate motherhood contracts. Although most Western nations have outlawed this practice, surrogacy contracts have become a thriving business in the United States. Very few states have regulated surrogacy, and only a handful, such as Michigan, have outlawed it. Virginia recently passed a law (with a 1993 enactment date) legitimizing the practice. Nationwide, the absence of laws and the lack of regulation have resulted in a practice where a paid mediator, also known as a baby "broker," brings a couple together with a woman who agrees to conceive and carry a child for them for a fee or other compensation. No state or federal laws require that the broker be credentialed, although Virginia's new law uniquely eliminates the broker in the transaction.

The surrogate mother is usually, but not always, artificially inseminated so that the adopting father will be the biological father. However, there are also cases where the surrogate is impregnated using in vitro fertilization techniques, so that the adopting mother will be the biological mother. Under terms of the contract, the surrogate mother is paid to surrender completely the child at birth. But as in the infamous case of Mary Beth Whitehead, many surrogate mothers have found that they developed a strong maternal bond and do not want to surrender the baby. Diane Rothberg, a surrogate mother from Massachusetts, testified of her grief after being forced to surrender the child:

> The pain that comes from these moments is not the same pain that comes with the loss of a vision or a right, but the loss of a real human being . . . the loss of a mother to a child, and a child to a mother. As I go through the everyday paces of parenthood, the pain of the loss does not ease. I realize what I am missing and the loss I suffer.

An increasing number of surrogate mothers have gone to court—where judges are expected to make Solomonic decisions—to gain custody of their child or even visiting rights. One recent case involved the birth of fraternal twins who were separated because the adopting parents already had boys and did not want another one, and a celebrated divorce case in California involved the surrogate, the biological father, and the adoptive mother all vying for custody.

Other tragedies have occurred. Pat Mounce, a Virginian, had a daughter who was a surrogate under a commercial contract. Both the daughter and the baby she carried died. As Pat testified before a Virginia legislative committee:

> She had been ill and very tired most of the eight months she carried the baby, whom she named Jackie. And by the way, she bought baby clothes; Denise was changing her mind. She called her obstetrician's office several times in September of 1987. She was six and one-half months pregnant. She was complaining of chest pains and her racing heartbeat. The records show she was in an absolute panic. And the only treatment Denise received was from a nurse who told her to take slow, deep breaths. Six weeks later she died of acute heart failure.

Although infertility is the primary reason given for commercial childbearing, singles, homosexual couples, and those who are not infertile also participate.

Opponents of commercial surrogacy charge that the practice is not in the best interest of the child, and exploits women and the poor. Andrew Kimbrell, an attorney with the Foundation on Economic Trends, describes a typical contract: "The very first provision says that the woman agrees *not* to perform a parental bond with the child that she bears—by contract, for ten thousand dollars. The other provisions include forced amniocentesis (forced genetic testing) and then abortion on demand of the customer."

Kimbrell adds that it is not the wealthy who become paid surrogate mothers: "Women who are often economically disenfranchised or who are in adverse emotional states are being victimized by these businessmen [the brokers], and who are being enticed by the ten thousand dollar fee or by some personal circumstance." Pat Mounce adds that one never sees, for example, "a Beverly Hills socialite carrying a child for a New Jersey garbage collector." Kimbrell concludes, "What we really risk here is forming—and I put this in quotations—a 'breeder class' of women who, for a fee, will act in this role."

The search for the perfect and planned child now extends to planning the perfect sex of the child. The practice of sex-selection abortions—those performed when the unborn child is not the "preferred" gender—is no longer the exclusive domain of foreign countries, such as India and China. Reports indicate that the practice is spreading throughout the United States.

When prenatal genetic testing began, sex-determination was made through amniocentesis performed between 15 and 18 weeks of pregnancy. Abortions resulting from such testing were performed in the second or third trimester. But with the increased use of a new procedure, chorionic villi sampling (CVS), sex-determination can be made as early in the pregnancy as seven to nine weeks. A woman can now choose an abortion in the first trimester when it is emotionally less difficult to abort—before she feels movement or bonds with the child. According to Dr. Wayne Miller, director of the prenatal diagnostic laboratory of Massachusetts General Hospital School of Medicine, the chorionic biopsies can be performed before "any identification of pregnancy in the mother's mind or the minds of her friends and family. The urge to use it for fetal sex determination is going to be much higher."

Incidents of sex-selection abortions are not just isolated cases. The *Fort Worth Star Telegram* (March 12, 1989) reports: "Dr. Michael Roth, a Detroit obstetrician, says he will do an abortion for the purpose of sex selection. 'You have a million abortions done every year. The majority are healthy. The reason they are terminated is because the woman has a reason and in most cases it is not because of the baby's health—so why shouldn't a . . . woman who . . . wants an abortion for fetal sexing have that option?'" The *Lancaster Sunday News* (January 22, 1989) quoted the administrator of Harrisburg Reproductive Health Services of Pennsylvania as saying of sex-selection abortions: "It's okay with us. We are not here to judge their rea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sons." The *New York Times* (May 30, 1985) carried a story stating: "A mother with two girls had amniocentesis and found out she was carrying another girl. She had her aborted." The feminist *Sojourner: The Woman's Forum* (December 1988) reported: "A woman who had tried all methods she knew to conceive a female child found out from chorionic villus sampling that she was carrying a boy. 'I aborted him,' she said."

Since most states do not require reasons for abortions in their reporting requirements, no one knows just how many sex-selection abortions are performed annually in the United States. However, the number of inquiries for CVS, and the actual number of CVS procedures performed, gives some indication of the demand for sex-determination and subsequent abortions, particularly when the tests are performed on healthy mothers and babies. While a number of obstetricians recommend routine ultrasound tests during pregnancy, and in the process determine the sex of the child, ultrasound does not place the mother or child at risk, as do the genetics tests. Therefore, requests for the early trimester prenatal genetics procedures suggest some other motive than merely wanting to paint the baby's room blue or pink. Massachusetts General, for example, has received over one hundred inquiries in a single year for CVS tests. The *Fort Worth Star Telegram* says that "Eugene Pergament, MD, a Chicago geneticist who does prenatal diagnoses, says he knows of about four women who have had abortions for sex selection from his clinic alone." The *Free Lance Star* reports "Dr. Laird Jackson of Philadelphia says that about 10 of the mothers visiting his prenatal diagnostic clinic at Jefferson Medical College between 1984 and 1987 went on to have sex-selection abortions." The *Washington Times* (February 13, 1987) carried a story in which Dr. Joseph D. Schulman, director of the Genetics and In-Vitro Fertilization Institute in Fairfax, Virginia, said he has performed the CVS procedure on about 1,400 women in the past two years: "Dr. Schulman and leaders of other government-sponsored pre-market studies of CVS acknowledged that they've also had cases in which the women have had the diagnostic test solely to find out the sex of their baby and, if it was not to their liking, have aborted."

Medical professionals such as Dr. Thomas McCormick of the University of Washington School of Medicine contend that CVS and other prenatal and diagnostic tests should not be used for the purpose of gender-selection abortions. Dr. McCormick says that medical science should be used for disease treatment, and "gender is not a disease." Because the vast preponderance of sex-selection abortions are performed on unborn females, some feminists decry the irony that their "right" to abortion is now being used as the ultimate, most violent form of sex discrimination. "So sure are some scientists that sex selection of children will soon be widespread that they are worrying with psychologists and sociologists about how it will affect the world. Almost everyone agrees that most parents will opt for boys, at least at first," writes Joan Beck in the *AMA News* (November 22, 1976). Affected, she says, will be family patterns and developmental characteristics derived from birth order, and a disproportion in the male-female population balance. In addition, it is morally repugnant to obstetricians who will be called upon to perform sex-selection abortions for what they consider to be a frivolous reason.

The practice is legal in nearly every state. Proscription of sex-selection abortions was one component of a pro-life law enacted in Pennsylvania, but legislation to outlaw the practice in Virginia was scorned by pro-choice legislators. In the absence of prohibitive laws, the trend is projected to continue and become a widely accepted practice. Andrew Kimbrell argues that the time to stop the practice is now, while demand for them is low, before people assume that fetal sexing is a right, and before the testing becomes an important source of revenue to prenatal diagnostic facilities.

This, then, is the state of the feminist dream of absolute control over reproduction. The abysmal track record is illustrated in the unforeseen damage done to women's health and fertility, unregulated commercialization of conception and childbearing, the exploitation of desperate and poor women and their unborn offspring, and the rates of technological failure. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, utopian leaders claimed that "Freedom is Slavery." In a supreme twist of irony, the utopian promise of "reproductive freedom" is delivering this very fate to millions of American women.

Anne Marie Morgan is a news reporter living in Chesterfield, Virginia.

LIBERAL ARTS

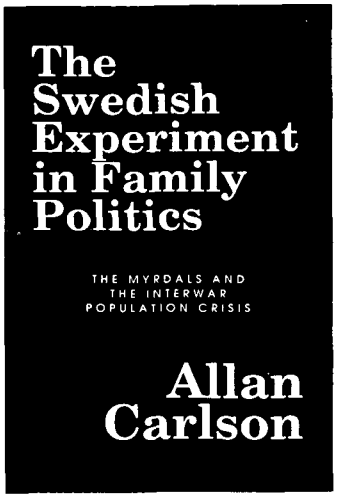
PC FROM THE EAST

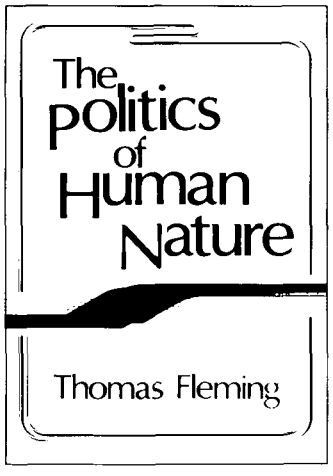
In the movie *Mr. Baseball*, Tom Selleck plays a former New York Yankee who joins a Japanese team and clashes with the Oriental way of doing things. According to the *New York Times* last November, the movie underwent changes after Matsushita Electric Industrial Company acquired the studio producing the movie. "When I originally signed on, this was just a baseball movie," said Selleck. "Then the studio got taken over, and it took on new overtones." Matsushita denied any intervention in the creative independence of the studio. But the script was rewritten, "at least two jokes about World War II" were eliminated, Selleck's character apologizes for his behavior, and he becomes more accepting of Japanese training. The original director was dropped, the movie's budget reportedly doubled, and "Japanese comics, playwrights, academics and other experts" were consulted so as not "to insult the Japanese or the Americans."

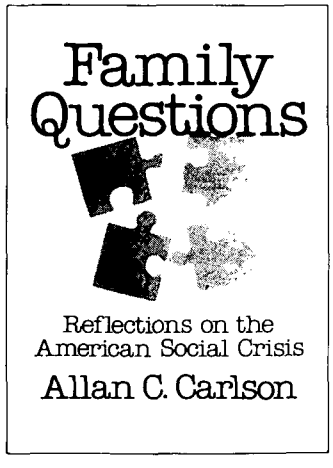
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transaction

New and Recent Books on Family and Policy







THE SWEDISH EXPERIMENT IN FAMILY POLITICS

THE MYRDALS AND THE INTERWAR POPULATION CRISIS

Allan Carlson

This devastating account of the work of Gunnar and Alva Myrdal portrays how two young scholars used the power of ideas to help engineer a new domestic order in Sweden. It offers the general reader remarkable insight into the nature of Scandinavian social life, and the specialist a critical perspective on how social science can itself become the problem, rather than providing solutions in contemporary post-industrial life.

ISBN: 0-88738-299-1 (cloth) 314 pp. $39.95

THE POLITICS OF HUMAN NATURE

Thomas Fleming

This effort to understand human nature in a political context takes up sex and gender differences, democracy and dictatorship, individual and familial patterns of association.

"Probing and thoughtful" –Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Chronicles*

"Learned, thoughtful, and superbly written"
–Robert Nisbet, *The National Review*

"Progressives and radicals could benefit from grappling with Fleming's intellectually stimulating presentation."
–*The Progressive*

"A wide-ranging and freewheeling review of sundry madnesses affecting modern political thought." –*This World*

ISBN: 0-88738-189-8 (cloth) 276 pp. $32.95

FAMILY QUESTIONS

REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN SOCIAL CRISIS

Allan Carlson

What accounts for the crisis in American family life? This creative search for answers borrows from conservative, feminist, and socialist traditions, offering a number of provocative explanations.

"One of the most profoundly sensible voices on the American landscape . . . All of his positions are carefully laid out and supported by meticulous research and precise reasoning."
–William Tucker, *The American Spectator*

"Genuinely profound" –E. Calvin Beiser, *World*

"Of interest to historians, social scientists/planners and students at the upper-division undergraduate level and above"
–D.A. Chekki, *Choice*

ISBN: 0-88738-206-1 (cloth) 335 pp. $39.95

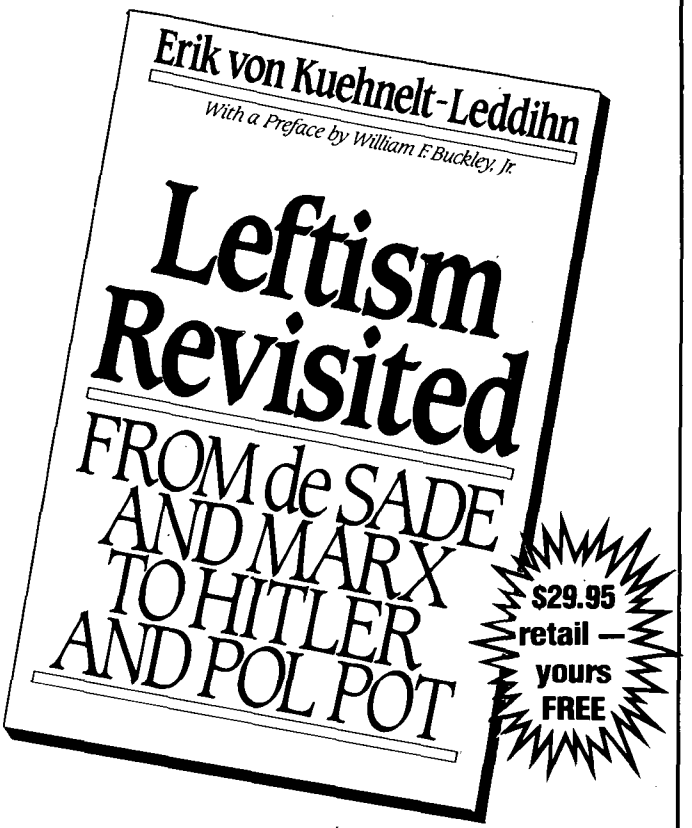
Order from your bookstore or direct from the publisher.
Major credit cards accepted. Call (201) 932-2280

transaction publishers
Department FPO12
Rutgers–The State University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Landmark study of liberalism

Where it comes from. The many faces it wears. And why it is still the menace


Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn
With a Preface by William F. Buckley, Jr.
Leftism Revisited
FROM de SADE AND MARX TO HITLER AND POL POT
$29.95 retail — yours FREE

"Communism isn't the enemy," observed Malcolm Muggeridge. "Liberalism is the enemy."

When Muggeridge said that, Communism was riding high. Now Communism is in crisis, while liberalism continues to choke religion and civilization. Muggeridge saw the heart of the problem. Communism was an external threat; liberalism not only corrupts from within, but also masquerades as something good.

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn is of the same mind. He sets his sights on the Left *in all its manifestations*. He's been doing that for 60 years. The range of his reading, his travel, his vision carries him across the globe, and across the centuries. The world is truly his oyster.

> **And now, the new book that William Buckley rightly calls "his masterpiece." Adds conservative columnist Joseph Sobran: "I despair of doing justice to the book's wealth of oddly enlightening fact, the harvest of long experience, reading, and travel."**

Precisely. Kuehnelt-Leddihn's view of the Left, in all its guises, is at once so particular and detailed, and at the same time so sweeping, that reading him is a unique experience, mind-opening. Max Eastman captured the feeling perfectly after reading one of his earlier books: "Amazing! Reading it is like going to college and graduate school all over again."

Except that college was never so exhilarating. What textbook, what professor gives you insights like these, *page after fascinating page*?

- Totalitarianism and benign liberalism: where they join hands
- "Equal in the eyes of God": why this notion is a heresy. Are "equality before the law" and "equality of opportunity" possible — or desirable?
- Democracy and totalitarianism: why they are not mutually exclusive
- The Communist Manifesto: 10 points that are now part of our thinking
- Aristotle and the scholastics: three good and three bad forms of government
- America's most left-wing presidents, and the damage they wrought — worldwide
- The socialist origins of fascism. What *is* socialism? Fascism?

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn belongs on the short list of major conservative thinkers of our century. And he stands alone as the most interesting, the most challenging.

How to get this $29.95 giant FREE

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing; it will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books will be offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ Good service. No computers! ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-90% discounts plus shipping and handling. Superbargains do NOT count toward fulfilling your Club obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB

15 OAKLAND AVENUE • HARRISON, N.Y. 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send FREE my copy of Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's $29.95 masterpiece, *Leftism Revisited*. I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon. CCUL 79

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED